







**YEAR OF  
THE WILD BOAR**





# YEAR OF THE WILD BOAR

AN AMERICAN WOMAN  
IN JAPAN

By  
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**THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COMPLETE  
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## FOREWORD

ONE OF the first questions asked by almost every Japanese I met who spoke English was, "What does your country think of Japan?" If I had answered frankly I should have said that America was not thinking of Japan at all—was almost entirely unfamiliar with the facts of Japanese culture, institutions and history, and indifferent about them. This fundamental indifference lasted until very recently.

There had seemed to be no reason for us to interest ourselves in the Japanese. We assumed that their ancient civilization was being rapidly replaced by a civilization similar to our own. Whenever we thought about it at all we were inclined to feel that, within the limits of their resources and ability, they had done rather well with this civilization. We kept on thinking so, despite occasional qualms and questions, almost up to the moment of Pearl Harbour.

This book has been a long time in the making. It is not easy to write about a people toward whom one's friends, neighbours and fellow-countrymen are largely indifferent or antagonistic, unless the intention is wholesale condemnation, and such was not my intention. My intention was to set down as accurately as possible what I saw and heard while living in Japan, hoping to have a record of how the Japanese actually live their day-by-day round; since, however, there is almost nothing that the Japanese do today that does not have some political implication, a setting-down of their daily activities inevitably leads to politics and international relations.

It is difficult for an American to write intelligibly of Japan. Everything about the Japanese civilization is almost precisely opposite from ours; their institutions, customs, and ways of looking at everything are peculiar to them, so that even when they speak English they seem to be talking in a code, or some kind of double talk, which the American has difficulty in translating into sensible American. Yet it is necessary today, as perhaps never before, to understand something of what has been going on in Japan. It is no longer wise or possible to ignore the special civilizations of our neighbours, especially those aspects of their civilizations that seem to us merely

"quaint and old-fashioned." For one of the things Japan teaches us is that such "backward" civilizations can develop, under the spur of a partial industrialization, with almost fantastic rapidity. It teaches us also that, in a competitive world, such development is likely to take the direction, not toward liberal democratic regimes, but toward totalitarian New Orders.

The general application of this conclusion is beyond the scope of this book. This volume is a personal record, with the emphasis on how the Japanese behave in their daily affairs. It is also, I believe, a sensible explanation of why they behave that way. It is, finally, a statement of part of the complex of forces that have driven the Japanese in their modern period to ruthless aggression.

The possibility of World War II was clearly foreseen in Japan in 1935. Innumerable small events—both inside Japan, and in Europe and Asia—suggested the pressure of forces in motion more powerful than the leaders who must control or guide them. Such straws in the wind were visible in Japan, for throughout her modern period Japan has been in the centre of the strains and stresses of power politics. America, however, powerful, wealthy, independent, and relatively isolated, could hope to escape the rising tide until it broke over into violence on December 7, 1941.

The lesson of Pearl Harbour would seem to be that today the world has grown so small that no nation, no matter how powerful or relatively isolated, can remain aloof from world movements. In such a world it is not enough to hate aggressors; it is necessary also to understand them. The peace that must follow this war will have to take into account the forces behind Japan's aggressive drives, or it will only lead to new and more frightful Pearl Harbours.

H. M.

*Towanda, Pennsylvania*  
*May, 1942*

(The title, *Year of the Wild Boar*, is explained on pages 221-2.)

**For  
Dee and Akiko**

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## PROLOGUE

THE SEA was flat and green, opaque as pewter. Shifting layers of mist muffled the shore in a curious green light. The small cargo boat, that had brought me to Japan, had just tied up to a buoy in Yokohama harbour; yet, as I stood at the rail, I saw no sign of life—nothing except a few motionless small vessels riding at anchor to suggest that we had reached land at last; nothing at all to remind me that this was port-of-entry to a great commercial city and capital of a Great Power.

Instead, what came insistently to my mind was the description, from Japanese mythology, of the creation of Japan—"What they beheld was a world not yet condensed, but looking like a sea of filmy fog, floating to and fro in the air." This is what a god and goddess saw as they stood on the "Floating Bridge of Heaven" before they had completed their task of giving birth to the islands of Japan. "A sea of filmy fog, floating to and fro in the air." The phrase so accurately described what I saw before me that we might have dived back in time to the mythological age before the creation.

As I stood looking at the mist-shrouded shore, thinking how strange it was that this port of a Great Power should so strongly suggest its national mythology, the higher mists suddenly split open to disclose, suspended high in the heavens, the black cone of Mount Fuji. It was a startling apparition, that seemed to have no base, no contact with the earth, but was a peak only, fixed in the heavens apparently by some supernatural law. The sky behind it was grey, and the sharp peak emerging from the swirling mists that concealed its base seemed overwhelmingly close and gigantic, really awe-inspiring.

This mountain is a goddess, worshipped yearly by thousands of white-robed pilgrims. It is also a symbol of home for all travelling Japanese. Fuji Sama, the goddess mountain, means Japan, the land of the gods, to the Japanese people. And here it was dominating this deserted harbour, that was also one of the two principal ports of the modern power Japan.



Suddenly, I thought of New York as it had looked when we left our dock and headed for the Narrows; the mass of skyscrapers towering toward the sky; the varied traffic moving under perfect control, crisscrossing the harbour; the gigantic docks where the greatest liners could lie at ease; and dominating it, the symbol that means home for the travelling American—the Statue of Liberty—that means America, the land of the free, to the American people.

How different these two harbours, and how different the symbols that dominate them. The port of New York gives entry into a man-made world, with the promise of freedom for the individual as its greatest value. The witness of that freedom is blazoned against the sky in those masses of steel and stone, is etched against the choppy waters in those ships bringing commerce from all over the world. It seems to tell the visitor that America is a nation created by men for the use of man. And what did this port of Yokohama tell the visitor? "Japan is the land of the gods."

The mists were sweeping upward and the cone of Fuji Sama was vanishing from sight. A small launch nosed out of the mist and headed in our direction, bringing, I supposed, the port authorities. As I turned from the rail, I realized, with a sudden thrill of anticipation, that I would soon be disembarked in Japan, would soon be reunited with my friend Daphne, whom I had not seen for almost four years, and whom I was joining for a holiday.

As I took my passport from my purse and headed toward the lounge, I was thinking that the American, in entering Japan, would be wise to discard his preconceived ideas and his own point of view, and try to understand, in its own terms, this strange country whose port-of-entry, at first sight, suggested nothing but the national mythology.

# I

## INTRODUCTION TO TOKYO

"WELL, here you are! This is Nobu."

Daphne is so English. An intimate friend whom I had not seen for almost four years, and this was her welcome as I stepped up from the small launch that deposited me and my baggage on a Yokohama dock.

It was fine to see Dee again. She looked, I thought, more English than I remembered—tall and blonde, her mouth humorous, her grey eyes tolerant—as always, brisk and dependable. Her companion, on the other hand, did not look especially Japanese. He was a slim, rather professorial-looking gentleman wearing rimless spectacles; and a Western-style suit of light grey flannel with matching socks and tie. I extended my hand, which he languidly accepted, but his eyes wandered away suggesting successfully that the best of him was occupied with much better affairs somewhere else. "Nobu came along to help with the customs," Dee explained.

She started off at once to lead me briskly down the quay and since the gentleman trailed well behind, I could ask, "Who is he?"

"You know. I've written you about him. Chiyo's brother-in-law."

A sharp clang, almost at my ear, made me swerve sharply and the porters with my bags passed us riding in a little motorized truck, driving it fast, almost triumphantly, as though they were inordinately proud of their modern conveyance. They were, however, the only sign of life.

"Where are the rickshaws and kimonos?" I demanded.

Dee turned into the customs shed. "They keep a few around and bring them out when the tourist ships come in," she answered. "They can't bother for a small freighter." She pointed to a packing-case and suggested that I sit down. She chose another, too far away to talk easily. The gentleman remained some distance away, on

the quay, gazing across the ocean. I unlocked my trunk, opened my bags, and sat down as directed.

"*Dozo*." A customs official in uniform had joined us. He bowed stiffly, said "*Dozo*" again, and went at my belongings, handling everything delicately, but missing nothing. In a few minutes, he had closed my trunks and one of my bags, and marked them with a bit of red chalk, bowed again and departed.

"Well, that was easy," I said to Dee.

It was too easy. I was bending over to close my other bags when a voice at my elbow said, "Please." I straightened to find a young Japanese looking at me shyly through tortoise-shell rims. He wore a white shirt open at the throat, and white duck trousers. He was bare-footed. Although this costume surprised me, it seemed very sensible; for although it was early June, the heat was oppressive and the atmosphere was weighted with some sickish-sweet odour that was suffocating. The young man explained apologetically, in halting English, that he must examine my books and papers. This he proceeded to do, examining with meticulous care every book and every scrap of writing, turning pages slowly, reading as he went. Time passed. I felt sure that I had nothing in my small library or my notes that even a Japanese would consider "dangerous thoughts," and the long wait made me impatient. When, however, I begged Dee to ask her friend to come in and try to speed things along, she merely shook her head and told me to be quiet and patient.

It was finished at last. A delegation of three officials in uniform made a final inquiry about firearms and cigarettes. There were ceremonious bows of farewell. Porters piled my innocent luggage into a taxi that would take us to Dee's home in Tokyo. Dee waved me in after it, and followed.

During these activities, Dee's companion had gradually approached nearer. Precisely as Dee took her place in the cab, he climbed in after her, and as the gears meshed smoothly and the taxi shot off, he settled down between us, emitting an explosive "*Sal!*" . . . so evidently an exclamation of satisfaction and relief that it seemed to confirm my suspicion that he had been avoiding us until he was quite sure that the customs official would not find any "dangerous

thoughts" in my baggage. I was wondering if I might ask him about this when he turned to look at me.

"I am so glad to meet an American," he said.

"You're to be exhibit A," Dee explained. "None of my Japanese friends has ever met an American. They're consumed with curiosity."

"I'm consumed with curiosity," I said. "I want to know what the customs official was looking for in my books and papers." I turned to Nobu. "Was it Communist propaganda, or what?"

His expression, which had been both interested and friendly, changed sharply. I noticed his heavy-lidded eyes, his aquiline nose, and his full mobile lips as his face became cold and empty. There was a disagreeable moment of silence. Then he said, "That is the sort of question in which I am not interested."

Because I felt uncomfortable and embarrassed, I persisted, "And what are you interested in?"

His face was expressionless. "I am interested in Art and Personality," he said. "I am interested in Time and Space."

Tactful Dee came to the rescue. She waved her hand toward the street along which our taxi was speeding at a nerve-racking pace, and asked if Japan looked familiar. I shook my head. She was referring to the fact that I had visited Japan briefly ten years earlier and had made this same trip from Yokohama to Tokyo. I had remembered the scene as predominantly rural. Now, however, there was a solid huddle of minute ramshackle one- and two-storey frame buildings with roofs of corrugated iron or tin, and in the background an occasional factory chimney belching smoke. Trolleys clanged by, clinging to overhead wires. There was nothing to assure me that I was in Japan, except an occasional shop sign in sprawling hieroglyphics, and the little people in kimonos dodging the traffic or pedalling bicycles. Everything was grey, monotonous, squalid. "It's not much like the Japan of the colour prints, is it?" I said aloud.

I turned toward the gentleman as I spoke. He frowned and his expression was arrogant. "This is not the real Japan," he said. "We Japanese take from the West what we need. We keep for ourselves our special way where the West cannot follow. It is so."

The antagonism in his tone was disconcerting. I nodded and

turned back to the window. He spoke again at once. "What do you seek in Japan?" he asked.

I hesitated, not knowing what sort of answer to make. He seemed so solemn, so almost portentous, with none of the light give-and-take an American expects in casual conversation. I had collected in my mind all the things that Dee had written me about him, and thought I had him placed. He was married to the younger sister of Chiyo San, Dee's most intimate Japanese friend, a woman who had been educated in England. Since Dee had come to Japan with Chiyo and had, for some time, lived with Chiyo's family, Nobu was, of course, an old friend. He was, Dee had written, a professor in one of the few "progressive" schools in the country, and he was considered quite an intellectual, a man who had read widely in foreign literature and philosophy, and who, although he had never been out of Japan, prided himself on his cosmopolitanism. I had thought of him as the person most likely to help me understand his country in Western terms. Already, however, I was beginning to be somewhat doubtful of this.

I told him that I was, like Dee, a writer and editor with foreign travel as a hobby. That I was taking a holiday from six years at an editorial desk in New York. That Dee had written me so much about the interest and beauty of Japan, and had been so provocative in her letters, urging me to join her, that I finally decided to do so. I had always been interested in the Far East, I told him, and had, ten years before, spent a year in China. At that time, I had had the usual tourist week or ten days in Japan, and had seen just enough of his beautiful country to make me long, some time, to return.

My account seemed to please him, and I felt a lessening of the tension between us. "Sal!" he said, "you think Japan is beautiful. It is so."

I turned back to the window without telling him that Dee had also written me that, if I wished to see a "controlled society" in action, I had better come to Japan which was the original model, perfect of its kind, and highly efficient. She had added that if I wished to see what the Japanese call the "real Japan" I must come at once, or it might be too late. This was 1935. Little enough was known in America about "controlled societies," and an American,

accustomed to the utmost in individual freedom, had some difficulty even in understanding what was meant by the term. The suggestion, however, that the "real Japan" might be vanishing did not seem absurd, as it would have ten years earlier. In the interval since 1925, when I first visited the Far East, the world had changed at an increasingly rapid pace; there had been a revolution in China; the Japanese had taken Manchuria and were steadily encroaching southward toward Peking; Hitler had come into power in Germany; Mussolini was threatening to extend civilization to Ethiopia; even America, free from the major problems that dogged the steps of less fortunate nations, had gone through the staggering blow of seeing her banks close. The tempo of change was everywhere accelerating at such a rate that there were today innumerable places you must hurry to see for the last time.

The taxi rasped to a stop. Dee leaned over and for a moment put her hand lightly on my arm. "Here we are," she said.

## 2

I climbed out of the taxi quickly, eager to see Dee's home that I was to share with her during my stay in Japan. I saw a row of minute one- and two-storey weatherbeaten grey frame structures ranged along a grey street under a grey sky. Directly before us there was an opening between two small shops, where a flight of stone steps led up to higher ground that made a terrace behind the small buildings fronting on the main street. Nobu, ignoring my luggage, made for these steps. Dee and I followed. The steps led up to a narrow, dirt alley just long enough to hold a row of nine identical, two-storey, stucco houses that would have been inconspicuous in any American suburb. They were each separated from the other by a minute garden of mould-green earth, with here and there a castor-oil or bamboo tree and a few flowers in pots. Their front windows looked down into the rears of the huddled shops below; behind them, the land rose abruptly to level out in an extensive park, which was, Dee explained, the estate of a wealthy Japanese baron. As we walked through the mud toward our house, the small, back porches of the shops waved a greeting with the

drying blue and white kimonos that dangled from bamboo poles; and on one of them a matron with her hair screwed back in a tight knot rocked her baby on her back while she hung up her heavy bedding to air. A monkey chained to a bamboo stake chattered furiously. From the estate of the baron came the loud barking of dogs. A neighbourhood radio filled the air with the shrill tones of a geisha singing Japanese jazz.

"Welcome home," said Dee, as she pushed open a bamboo gate and went into the yard of the next-to-the-last house. She opened a wooden door that led into a small cement-floored vestibule and called out a long phrase in Japanese. The inner doors were sliding paper panels, which were at once pushed back to disclose a young girl who bobbed back and forth in a series of jerky bows, smiling in an artificial and self-conscious manner, and greeting us in fluid and complicated Japanese. At first sight, she suggested familiar America. Her hair was straight and bobbed short. She was dressed in a plaid gingham blouse and a short blue flannel skirt; her legs were bare; her feet, however, belonged with her elaborate greetings, for she was wearing *tabi*, the Japanese ankle-high cloven socks that have the big toe separated from the rest of the foot, to provide a place for the thong of the sandal. Down to the ankles, she looked like an American schoolgirl, but her feet were those of a faun.

Dee beamingly made the introduction. "This is Akiko San, my companion and housekeeper," and went on to ask her, in English, some questions about her classes. Akiko answered in Japanese, kneeling meanwhile to open a leather box, from which she brought out several pairs of heelless flannel slippers, arranging them in a row, toes pointing in. The gentleman had already removed his shoes. Now he stepped up into the entrance hall, nodded briefly to Akiko, ignored the slippers, and walking in his socks, pushed back a sliding panel and disappeared into an inner room. Dee commanded me to remove my shoes, and sat down on the edge of the floor to remove her own. "Akiko's just back from her typing class at the Y.W.," she said. "She's studying typing and English. She understands pretty well, but is shy about speaking. She says she wants to learn American from you."

I said I hoped to learn some Japanese from her. She had stepped

down beside us, slipped her feet into a pair of wooden clogs, and was wiping our shoes. Then she put them away in a closet that made one whole side of the vestibule, and clattered out into the alley, I supposed to see about my bags.

Dee now stepped up into her hall and slid into a pair of the heelless flannel slippers, telling me, meanwhile, about her house. She was lucky to get it, she said, because such modern houses were scarce and hard to find. It was expensive, but worth it, because so Westernized and convenient. As I stepped up beside her, she went on to say that, as a rule, foreigners in Tokyo live in the Imperial Hotel or in some one of the few modernized apartments or houses in the centre of the city where they can have central heating and plumbing. At this, I was startled. "Haven't we plumbing?" I asked.

For answer, Dee slithered over the hardwood floor of her hall and pushed back an unpainted wooden panel. The toilet was a porcelain rim sunk in the floor over an open cesspool. I was astonished. It was like finding an outside toilet as the sanitary arrangement for an expensive New York apartment. "It's emptied once a week," Dee went on, "and the contents sold for fertilizer." Now I understood the source of the heavy, sickish-sweet odour that vaguely saturated the sultry air. It was not what I had been led to expect by the numerous accounts I had read of Japan's modernization. I found myself thinking of the house I lived in, ten years before, in Peking. It was in a Chinese section of the city, a rambling, grey stone house with tiled roof, set behind grey stone walls, and arranged around a series of courtyards connected by moon gates. It, too, had been on a muddy alley, and an occasional caravan of supercilious camels had sauntered past, in from the Gobi desert. Despite this Chinese atmosphere, however, we had had an American-style bathroom as a matter of course. In Peking we combined Oriental atmosphere with Western comforts. It seemed to me that here we were combining Western atmosphere with Oriental discomforts.

Now Dee was leading me toward a flight of stairs. "Our sleeping rooms are on the second floor," she said, and started up. I followed as best I could. The stairs were very steep and shallow, and my too-large flannel slippers were so unmanageable that I finally kicked



them off and walked in my stockings. Of my room I noticed only that the floor was covered with matting, for my bags were scattered about and I began at once to tug at the straps. I had been thinking in terms of the comforts of shore for so long that now, despite the gentleman waiting below, I felt I must bathe and change to something cooler. And I would just hang away a few dresses. I asked if I could have a bath. Dee said evasively that she had asked Akiko to prepare one for me and that it would probably be ready later on, but now I should come and have my tea. I was not used to having my bath prepared for me as Dee well knew, but without waiting for my protests, she went off downstairs.

I unpacked a few dresses, and with them over my arm, pushed back a chrysanthemum-decorated panel—the closet was all shelves, and already half full of what looked like a mattress, bedding and a pile of fresh kimonos. I went out to the hall and softly called Akiko. She came up at once, looking like a little schoolgirl, and I asked her what the Japanese do with their clothes. In pantomime, she showed me—they fold things. I felt that there must be some other solution, but Akiko's English was not equal to discussion, so I turned back to the cupboard. The crisp summer kimonos decided me. Japan was the land of the kimono and I should wear one to tea. Beginning hastily to take off my suit and blouse, I asked Akiko about my bath. "*Mada mada*," she said, shaking her head in a gesture of obvious negation. Surrendering, I slipped into a kimono, folded it in place, and tied it firmly with a narrow cotton sash.

Akiko began to giggle. She pointed to the kimono and again shook her head. I asked what was wrong. "*Shukan*," she said. Then frowning with concentration, she brought out the English word, "custom." With some difficulty, she managed finally to explain that, according to Japanese custom, you fold a kimono right side over left only in case of death. It was a mistake, I gathered, that Dee was always making. It was very comic.

I folded the kimono properly, retied, and asked Akiko if now I was all right for tea. Her giggles redoubled. She shook her head with renewed firmness. The suggestion violated *shukan*, for the kimono was a nightdress. At this I protested. The kimono was

one of the blue-and-white garments that are practically a uniform for the Japanese in summer. I had seen dozens on the street as we came from Yokohama. Nightdress or not, if the Japanese could wear them on the street, why couldn't I wear one for tea at home? It took some time, but finally Akiko managed to explain that my sash was wrong. The kimono, that was a nightgown if tied with a narrow cotton sash, became formal attire if held in place with a mass of padded silk or brocade that the Japanese call an *obi*.

I stood for a moment overwhelmed by the ingenuity of this arrangement, thinking of hot summers in New York and how wonderful it would be if one could simply wear a nightdress, with perhaps a string of beads added to make it formal. I was clearly already involved in the "special way" of Japan that Nobu had mentioned, and that "Westerners cannot follow." I could not follow it at the moment, at any rate, since I did not own an *obi*. I slipped into a rumpled dress, looked ruefully at my shoeless feet, and sliding shut the door of the cupboard, wondered if I would ever get settled in Dee's convenient, modern home. At this moment her voice called from below demanding what on earth was keeping me.

Dee led me at once across the hall and slid back the panel behind which Nobu had disappeared. At the far end of a double room, I saw him sitting crosslegged on the floor although our end was full of proper furniture. "Why is Nobu sitting on the floor?" I whispered to Dee, who answered absent-mindedly, "It's the custom, you know. *Shukan*."

I gave it up for the moment and looked around. The long room was really two which opened into each other and which illustrated respectively Japanese and Western ideas of comfort. Nobu had chosen the Japanese room, which was carpeted with *tatami* or straw-matting, and had no furniture except a low table, and in the *tokonoma* or alcove, a Flower Arrangement and a picture scroll. Dee's Western room was a conventional living-room. The Japanese and Western rooms seemed to thumb noses at each other, each making the other look ridiculous. It puzzled me too that Nobu, who wore Western clothes and spoke English, should prefer to sit on the floor when there were chairs.

That he did prefer it, however, was obvious from the ease of

his posture. As we joined him on the mats, I admired it—his back straight yet relaxed, his legs folded neatly, his knees flat on the floor, his feet in reverse tucked over his thighs like some Westernized Buddha. Looking at his feet that seemed to have been moulded in position from India rubber, I thought suddenly how disagreeable shoes must be to a Japanese.

While we chatted, I was trying to get the feel of the place. Most of the outer side-wall was fitted with a series of sliding panels that were now pushed back in their grooves so that we seemed to be in a semi-open veranda. Beside us, the small garden was almost at hand's reach—a bamboo tree, some coreopsis, nasturtiums, and daisies blooming in large blue pots, and cicadas shrilling in the tall grasses of the hillside. The sun-warmed matting gave off a pleasant faint smell of straw. The whole effect was curiously rural. Although we could hear bicycle bells on the main street below our alley, and an occasional taxi horn, the insect noises were more dominant and underneath was a tomtom beat of an insistent drumming. It was hard to remember that this was a great modern city.

Dee, sprawling comfortably, began to talk about her house. She said she always thought of it as an excellent description of modern Japan. If, she said, one stood off a bit and looked at the stucco façade one could believe it was a substantial structure, thoroughly American. The stucco face, however, was only a front. The rest of the house was constructed of the usual wooden frame fitted with sliding panels, and the domestic arrangements were almost wholly Japanese. The entire country, she said, was like that. It was only from a distance that Japan looked like a Westernized modern nation. Inside Japan you learned at once that the modernization was merely a camouflage to disguise the real Japan.

Nobu looked at her coldly. "No Westerner can understand the real Japan," he said.

We were interrupted by Akiko bringing the tea. As she knelt to serve it, I was bothered again by the incongruity of this mixture of Japanese and Western. Akiko's short skirt wrinkled across her thighs, exposing chunky, bare legs at the end of which her little cloven socks made an odd accent. The tea-things were on a lacquered tray—English cups with handles, a plate of purple bean-

jelly candy, and a can of condensed milk bound around with a wisp of bamboo. While Akiko poured the tea, Dee explained some of the mysteries of her tea-party. The tea was not the pale sort preferred in the Orient—always served plain and in handleless cups—but was strong and black, in honour of Nobu, who liked in her home to sample Western customs. The milk was condensed because it was so hard to get fresh milk in practically cowless Japan. Akiko had contributed the bamboo to dress up the can because the undecorated container was too unæsthetic and she had not yet learned the Western custom of pouring the milk out into a pitcher. Akiko had also chosen the sweet, a special kind of beanjelly candy which symbolized Welcome to a Guest; and had created the Flower Arrangement in the alcove beside me, which also symbolized Welcome. Now, Dee went on, if I were a proper Japanese guest I would pay my respects to both candy and flowers by bowing to them and thinking of some suitable quotation from an Emperor or some twelfth-century sage.

The neighbourhood radio coming on full blast drowned out Dee's voice. Then it was turned down a little and the music became audible—a woman's chorus singing in English, "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood." Nobu, ignoring the din, looked at Dee coldly. "No foreigner can understand Japanese culture," he said, and added, "It is so."

I was ready to admit that at least one foreigner, at the moment, could not understand this Japan. As I accepted a piece of the purple beanjelly candy that symbolized Welcome to a Guest, bowing to it as suggested, I was suddenly overwhelmed by the feeling that I had unaccountably arrived on one of those comic-strip other-planets or in some surrealist world in which familiar objects became fantastic because of the incongruity of relation and surroundings. For a group of adults, wearing Western clothes, but shoeless, to sit on the floor, to drink English tea with condensed milk, and eat symbolic beanjelly, while a radio gave a programme of Methodist hymns—this might happen in a nightmare. It was not, of course, the difference in custom that bothered me. Usually it was precisely the difference in custom that made the charm of foreign travel. What I felt here was the meeting of two civilizations that

seemed mutually antagonistic. As though to illustrate this further, Akiko, her duties finished, left the room, performing excesses of etiquette that, because of her Western clothes, seemed almost to burlesque Japanese formal custom.

"Lose all their guilty stains". . . The chorus filled the room, to stop abruptly as the radio switched to a man's voice declaiming in hortatory Japanese. I asked Nobu if he could make out what the man was saying. He seemed not to have heard the question, but Dee said, "It's some military gentleman or statesman explaining about the crisis."

Dee, being English, never talks in italics, but her voice nonetheless managed to make the word "crisis" sound as though set off by quotes, or spelled with a capital C. "What crisis?" I asked.

"The State of Crisis. In international relations, you know. As announced by the Emperor . . ."

Dee got so far when Nobu interrupted as though she were not speaking and turning to me said that it was difficult for a foreigner to understand Japanese culture because it was so subtle; if I really wished to try I must approach it through symbolism. The best way to do this was through the Cults of Tea and Flowers. Gracious and charming, he went on to give us an extremely abstract description of the Tea Ceremony, and if he did not entirely clarify my understanding of this ritual, he at least made it clear that he preferred not to discuss international politics. He was telling us that the Tea Ceremony illustrated the fact that even the most vulgar detail of daily life could be made exquisite by ritual and symbol, when there was a low cry at the door. The panels were slid back to disclose a charming figure who seemed to have just stepped from the pages of Loti—Madame Chrysanthème in person. It was not until Dee spoke to her that I recognized Akiko.

She was wrapped in a colourful delicate silk kimono bound around with a huge brocade sash. Her bobbed hair had disappeared under a knot fastened with silver pins at the nape of her neck. And as though her whole personality depended on her clothes, the awkward, almost sullen little schoolgirl had turned into a lovely and dignified young woman. As she slithered over to the edge of the Japanese room, her long skirt made little swaying movements,

and as she knelt on the mats and placed beside her a large bundle wrapped in a multicoloured silk handkerchief, her long sleeves rippled, so that her movements, that before had seemed jerky and awkward, were now flowing and graceful.

She began to talk to Dee in Japanese, and Dee answered in the same language. I gathered from a certain brusqueness in Dee's voice that usually masked emotion that it was more than a routine household exchange. Then Dee turned to Nobu, still speaking Japanese. I thought from her tone she was asking a question. Nobu, however, ignored her. He looked at me and said, "You must learn to eat time and space."

Bewildered, I turned to Dee for an explanation. She was looking at Nobu with an expression both affectionate and commiserating. Then she turned back to Akiko. They exchanged *sayonara*. That, I understood, meant Akiko was going out. I returned her bow. The outer door closed behind her with a loud click.

"How lovely Akiko looks in kimono," I said. "I suppose she is off to a party."

"She's off to visit Ino, her husband."

"To visit her husband?" I echoed.

Dee hesitated a moment, glancing at Nobu. He was sitting immobile like a plaster cast labelled "Inscrutable Oriental." "She will have to know," said Dee to the image.

Then she told me that Ino was Nobu's friend as well as Akiko's husband; that, at one time, both Ino and Nobu had belonged to a group of intellectual radicals who read Marx and Lenin and talked vaguely of some coming social revolution in Japan. Nobu, Dee said, had never had more than a theoretical interest in politics; but Ino had actually worked with a group who were attempting to form political parties among the farmers. This was, in Japan, very radical behaviour, and Ino was finally arrested along with innumerable others accused of having such "dangerous thoughts." After Ino's arrest, Nobu brought Akiko to Dee as a refugee.

Startled, I turned to Nobu, my mind filled with questions. They remained unspoken, however, for he was sitting quietly in the pose he had assumed early in the afternoon, and he gave the effect of being actually on a different level of experience, a level where

husbands-in-jail did not exist, and where wives who dressed like butterflies to visit such husbands did not exist. "Come," he repeated, "we will eat time and space together."

He swung his arms in a wide arc and brought them to rest across his body, elbows bent, the left arm horizontal, the right pointing toward heaven, thumb and forefinger making a broken circle, "striving to touch but not touching." It was a position of the Buddha on his lotus, a position also assumed by those of the Zen Sect when they desire to practise meditation—to escape, that is, from the cruel or tedious realities of this world into the "emptiness" of a mystic contact with the infinite. Looking at this professor who was obviously using this esoteric ritual to avoid discussion of his friends—as he had earlier avoided discussion of the customs and the "crisis"—it occurred to me that both Nobu and Akiko were straddling two civilizations and were at ease in neither. One thing was already certain: to understand them, I should have to forget their Western clothes and English sentences and look for the answers in terms of the Japanese facts that motivated their behaviour. And before I could dismiss Nobu as merely an eccentric individual, I should have to be sure his preoccupations and behaviour were not typical expressions of a civilization that bewildered an American because so precisely different from the American's accustomed way.

Behind me, Dee was making a small clatter with the tea-things. "Empty your mind," Nobu was saying. "We will eat time. It is very restful to eat time."

### 3

The average foreigner who lives for any time in Japan goes through three stages—amused bewilderment, violent irritation, and, finally, fascination or repulsion. I was no exception to this rule. For the first week or two, while I was settling down in Dee's house, and getting my bearings in our neighbourhood and the city at large, I rode an emotional seesaw, one end of which was astonishment, and the other annoyance. The period of submersion, when I was trapped by the fascination of Japan, came much later, and was accompanied by fear—fear not only for what seemed inevitable for

Japan, but for what the Japanese crisis might mean to the rest of the world. Mixed with this there was, too, anxiety and affection for the individuals who had become my friends.

In the early days all Japan seemed a confusion of inconveniences, frivolities and mysteries, either amusing or bothering. What these meant in terms of the harsh facts of economic and political Japan, I did not know till later. What I learned immediately, however, was that once you have entered the semi-Westernized doorway to Japan at Yokohama, are searched for seditious literature in the customs, travel the twenty ugly miles to Tokyo—if you settle down in a Japanese house, a half-hour distant from the business centre, adjusting your life to the daily routine of your Japanese friends and neighbours, you leave the American idea of Japan and the Japanese behind you. The energetic, aggressive, Westernized, modern nation that makes headlines all over the world seems, to the American living in Tokyo, a country left behind in the newspapers. The country you must adjust yourself to seems predominantly childlike, fantastic and improbable, and, although you discover at last that even the most trivial and most improbable fact of Japanese custom is related to Japan's aggressive reality, it is still a reality very different from the one expected.

I entered a country that had been in a declared "State of Crisis" for two years. In Asia, the warriors and industrialists were expanding steadily the boundaries of empire; within the country itself the equilibrium among the controlling groups was so treacherous that it was to flare into open rebellion within a year. Despite this, I lived and travelled freely about the country—alone, with Dee, with Akiko and other Japanese friends, with interpreters. I talked to shopkeepers in minute country villages, with farmers and fishermen, with government officials, labour leaders, textile workers, with numerous English-studying groups of university students and with miscellaneous people on trains, at hot-spring inns, in city and country, in scattered parts of Japan, and from all these collected very little direct evidence that they were aware of the crisis of which the radio and government lecturers daily advised them, that filled the columns of the newspapers, that was the subject of articles in the magazines. Moreover, such evidence of crisis as I collected



from personal experience seemed trivial to the point of absurdity. That is, they seemed trivial until I came at last to understand what they meant from the Japanese point of view.

It was not that I was unaware of war in progress and the threat of more serious war. Soldiers in uniform were a fairly common sight in Tokyo, marching in companies to worship at some Shinto shrine, or gathered at the railway stations as they left for the Asiatic mainland, while swarms of matrons in kimono bowed, their faces expressionless, on the platforms decorated with paper flowers and the flags of all nations. There were also the gala days when the fleet was in, and the barbers offered free haircuts to "our brave sailors," and small ships gave free banquets of eels or pickled rice-balls. While touring in northern Japan, we were pursued for days by air-defence manœuvres, with blackouts and sham battles, and our train windows tightly boarded for suffocating hours. I was aware, too, of constant espionage—that is, I knew that it existed. The first week I was in Japan the police came to check up on the new foreigner; later, when we travelled, the police kept track of my movements; the registration at all inns was an involved questionnaire; and one could not so much as climb a mountain in the wilds of northern Hokkaido without registering with the police at its base.

Such things, however—soldiers and sailors, air-defence manœuvres, and police espionage—were no sign of "crisis" in Japan, nor did they excite the smallest interest in the average Japanese. Throughout her modern period Japan has been under arms and the people are so used to uniforms, to the sight of soldiers worshipping at the national monuments, to the spectacle of matrons waving flags and geisha buying bombing planes for the army, that such sights are merely taken as a matter of course. As for espionage, it is a routine of Japanese life. The police keep track of every inhabitant in every small home, even to the point of making sure that the housewife keeps her home tidy. While such supervision seems intolerable to the American, and although it is used to prevent independent thinking as much as to prevent criminal activity and epidemics, few Japanese I met seemed to find it in any way oppressive, and, in fact, were astonished that I should question and resent it.

The tension of the crisis, for the most part, appeared in events and activities that seemed, actually, merely quaint and improbable: in a Nobu "eating time and space" to avoid political discussion; in a special national festival to honour a fourteenth-century member of the Imperial House; in the decision of a small village to resume the eating of beanjelly candy after an abstinence of six hundred years; in a circle of old women dancing in the temple courtyard; in the almost hysterical reiteration by Japanese statesmen of implausible formulas; in the completely hysterical emphasis on certain cultural activities and on certain mythological facts. For the crisis was internal as well as international, and the internal crisis was of such a kind that it could not even be expressed in Western terms until first expressed in terms of Japan's special situation—and although Japan's "crisis" might seem unimportant to the Western nations, it was of crucial importance in determining the future of the Great Power Japan.

These conclusions, which can only be made clear in terms of what I saw and heard and read throughout my entire stay in the country, must be stated here so that the reader will not merely dismiss as improbable or unimportant the trivialities of Japanese custom that are so important in Japan. For if what Nobu called "the real Japan"—the Japan of etiquette, *shukan*, cults and symbolism—must seem to the American mere decoration, if not eccentric and implausible esotericism—nevertheless, the American's "real Japan"—the Japan of politics, industry and imperialism—is supported by it. And it is only in terms of the first that the second is comprehensible.

If in the end I was able to reach some conclusions that seemed, at least to me, to clarify the special crisis of Japan and to explain her mysteries in human terms, it was largely because of my close association with Nobu, Akiko, and Dee. Because of Nobu's position as a student and a teacher in a progressive school, he taught me, indirectly, more about Japanese notions of education and ways of thinking than all the innumerable reports and studies that I read. Once our relationship was firmly established on a basis of ignoring all "dangerous thoughts," he gave me many fascinating glimpses of his "real Japan." Akiko, in turn, helped me to remember that the

"real Japan" was inhabited by human beings. The rituals of daily life, the elaborate theatricalism of day-by-day etiquette, the little involved customs, are endlessly picturesque; the rituals of formal, social relations, of worship at shrines and temples, are stylized and finished theatrical performances; the country itself casts a spell, combining, as it does, the utmost in natural beauty with a conscious harmony between dwellings and fields and hills that makes plausible the intimacy between the people and their nature-gods which is still so real a part of the atmosphere of Japan. If it had not been for Akiko, I might have been content to see merely the "oddities" or fascination of this strange and vanishing civilization. She was, however, my housemate, my daily companion, often my interpreter, finally my friend. Through our association and my growing affection for her, I was forced to look behind the merely quaint to see what it meant in terms of the facts of her situation. Once I had gone so far, it was inevitable that I should attempt to apply what was true for her to the larger canvas of Japan. As for Dee, how can I express my debt to her? Her three years' residence in the country, her intimate relationship with many Japanese families, her cool appraising unprejudiced mind, gave her a background unusual in scope and understanding. Her knowledge of the language, of the country, of its history—along with her many friends—were all generously shared with a patience, wit and good humour that smoothed the difficulties and turned the irritations into amusing adventure. To both Akiko and Dee, I am endlessly indebted. Without them, I should not have learned much about Japan.

## 4

My first afternoon in Tokyo had presented me with problems enough to keep me busy for months. There were the stories of Akiko and Nobu; there was the "crisis" that the radio had called to my attention and that Nobu had chosen to ignore; there was the "special way of the real Japan" that Nobu was so preoccupied with. All these, however, seemed less important at first than my desire to get settled in Dee's home, to have a proper bath, to get unpacked and my clothes put away—in short, to get organized in Japan. These

simple matters that in any other world capital would be merely routine, to be done without thinking and forgotten, became in Tokyo, for some time, a major interest. For, as I learned within ten minutes of setting foot in Dee's home, Japan's "special way" was obtrusive in every department of daily living, and if it included such things as the Cult of Tea and Flowers, it also included baths and beds.

The first two Japanese words that I learned were *mada mada* and *shukan*.

*Mada mada* means simply "later on." In practice, it means "never do today what can be postponed till tomorrow," and, although tomorrow can actually mean tomorrow (as was the case with my bath), it can also mean next month (as was the case of my closet), or it can mean next year (as was the case with innumerable amiable promises made me by people who were merely saying "no" politely). This inevitable postponement of everything greatly complicates life, especially for the American.

*Shukan* means "custom," "the customary thing." It lies at the bottom of everything that goes on in Japan. No matter what else a Japanese appears to be doing, he is first of all obeying the rules, following the accustomed pattern of behaviour. Conversely, it is practically impossible for a Japanese, living in Japan, to be persuaded to perform any act contrary to custom. These two words, which I learned at once in trying to adjust to Dee's home, followed me all about Japan, and were obtrusive in every department of Japanese affairs that I came across.

On my first afternoon in Tokyo, after Nobu had gone, Dee took me on a tour of inspection of her house, describing and explaining as she went. It was, she assured me, an extravagant, modern house—the sort chosen by well-to-do Japanese who had learned the comforts of Westernization. She had sublet it from some Japanese friends who had moved to the suburbs. The rent was 75 yen a month! Dee announced this with awe and apology (for I was to share expenses), but since a rapid calculation told me that it amounted to around twenty-eight dollars in American money, it hardly seemed extravagant for a whole house in a great city. Dee, however, pointed out that the yen is the Japanese dollar, and that

the average urban Japanese earns around 30 yen a month. Actually, the sort of Japanese who could afford our house would correspond with the class of New Yorker who pays \$250 a month for an apartment. This fact, Dee said, was hard for the foreigner to grasp since the foreign-style hotels and restaurants, designed for tourists, were expensive enough even by American standards. Such places, however, were as foreign to the average Japanese as New York would be.

The modern conveniences for which we paid this great rent were: electricity—a solitary light swinging from a cord for each room, and in the kitchen a two-burner gas-stove and an iron sink with running cold water.

These conveniences, familiar to the slums of American cities, were in Tokyo practically Park Avenue luxuries. Electricity is the only modern convenience that is general for the country. Running cold water is still a luxury even in the great cities; and running hot water is unheard of except in the few modern hotels, office buildings, houses and apartments in the heart of the city, and at the hot-springs. The average Tokyo housewife must still carry her water from a central source, and must heat it, and cook on a charcoal brazier.

From a Japanese point of view, however, we had other extravagances. First, there was space. We had six rooms in addition to kitchen and bath. The average family of five live in one or two rooms which serve every purpose from bedroom to kitchen, and they bathe in the public baths.

Then we had glass doors in addition to those of paper and wood. Dee illustrated how the different sets slid open or shut in their grooves, the paper inside, the glass behind them, and the wooden panels outside to be closed at night as a protection against the demon-haunted night air. Glass, Dee explained, was a very modern and extravagant wrinkle. Only the upper classes used it. In the usual house the living-room floor extended out beyond the sliding walls to make a narrow veranda protected by steeply sloping eaves that shed the rain, so that glass was really unnecessary. But our modern house was veranda-less and we needed glass for daytime protection of our living-room.

As Dee led me about we kept running into illustrations of the words *mada mada* and *shukan*. First, there was the bathroom. Dee

showed it off with pride—a sunken room with a cement floor over which was a wooden lattice. The lattice was damp and outside the door were several pairs of straw slippers to protect our shoeless feet whenever we entered to wash our faces or brush our teeth. The fact that the lattice was damp was the result of both *shukan* and *mada mada*—that is, there was a special technique of bathing; and there was the difficulty of getting a workman to come and fix anything. The thing that needed fixing was a solitary spigot for cold water which protruded dripping from the back wall. Since the washbowl was not under it, but was on a small table in one corner, the drip went onto the lattice. So, moreover, did the bathwater, for the tub was emptied by pulling out a plug and letting the water flood across the floor and out through a hole onto the ground outside. The tub was a deep egg-shaped contraption, part of which was a metal stove, and part a wooden vat divided into one large and two small compartments, fitted with wooden covers. A stove-pipe rose from the structure, crossed the room, and disappeared through a hole in the wall. The tub was filled by running in cold water through a rubber hose attached to the spigot, and heated by a fire of twigs and charcoal in the stove. The technique of bathing was *shukan* and rigorously enforced. First, you filled the washbasin with water from one of the small compartments (old-fashioned American kitchen stoves had the same arrangement) and, standing on the lattice, soaped thoroughly and rinsed, splashing as much as you desired, while the floor became gradually a pond. After the preliminary scrubbing, you could clamber into the vat, squat there comfortably sitting on your heels with your chin just missing the water, and gently parboil. The Japanese take their baths up to 125 degrees F. and are conditioned to this heat by being popped into the bath as a routine of babyhood. In a private home, the entire family bathes in the large bath, in turn, using the same water. The males come first, followed by the females, in the order of importance.

Dee gave me these facts as we gazed into our luxurious, private bathroom that placed us among the privileged few of Tokyo. I listened, feeling somewhat blank. The tub was empty and there was no sign of fire in the stove. Here again, as Dee apologetically explained, I was up against *mada mada* and *shukan*, for it was

Akiko's task to make the bath, and she had postponed doing so. At this, I acquiesced at once, as after all, Akiko seemed to have more serious things on her mind than making baths. Dee, however, assured me Akiko's private difficulties had nothing to do with it; there was always this trouble about a bath. It was not *shukan* to bathe at home, and Akiko thought it foolish when the public baths were so much less trouble and so much more pleasant. Usually, she did finally prepare a tub two or three times a week, but it was always a struggle to persuade her to.

After we had inspected the first floor—which included two rooms for Akiko's private use—Dee took me up to my bedroom to help me get settled. It was a spacious room with an alcove. The two outside walls were largely sliding windows that opened to give an agreeable rural view of hillside and trees. Dee had supplied me with a woven bamboo cot, a wicker table and chair, and in the alcove a small Chinese dressing cabinet with small drawers for cosmetics and a mirror. To use this I had to kneel like the heroine of *The Mikado*.

"I think we'd better get your bed made first," said Dee; and sliding open the cupboard, she began to haul out a heavy mattress.

"I generally make my bed at night to spare Akiko," she went on. "She will, of course, unmake it in the morning."

"Unmake it?" I said blankly. Then, as Dee's lips opened in explanation, I knew the answer and we said together, "*shukan*," and had to stop our bed-making until we finished laughing.

The Japanese custom is to sleep on mattresses spread on the mats at night and stuffed into the cupboards by day. This is, of course, to save space, since the average Japanese uses the same room for cooking, living, and sleeping. Dee had at first tried to explain to Akiko that with Western-style beds in separate sleeping-rooms, this was not necessary. She had, however, long since learned that to a Japanese a habit is a habit and really it was easier if one just relaxed.

The bed made, Dee helped me hang my dresses on hangers which we affixed to a narrow moulding that framed the sliding doors of the closet and inner wall. By the time I was unpacked, my room looked like a fitting-room in a department store. This, too, was caused by *shukan and mada mada*. As soon as she knew I was

coming, more than two months before, Dee had asked Akiko to ask a carpenter to come and saw a closet-shelf in two and put in a bamboo pole from which I could hang my clothes. But to hang clothes was not *shukan*, and to saw a shelf was to spoil a good closet, so that Akiko had not been able to understand the request. When at length Dee realized this and managed to persuade her to summon the carpenter, he in turn, failed to understand, and in any case *mada mada*.

## II

### FIRST DAYS

I WAS awakened at six on my first morning in Toyko by a loud blast of a trumpet sounding Reveille. It came over some neighbourhood radio, and was followed immediately by the strains of a military band and a man's stentorian tones marking time—"Ichi, ni, san, chee"—evidently, I thought, leading setting-up exercises. When it stopped at last, I could hear the cicadas humming in the tall grasses on the hillside beside the house, and in the near distance somewhere, the steady, insistent sound of drumming, a syncopated, throbbing beat that suggested voodoo and black magic, an odd sound to hear in a modern city.

When I awoke it was seven and the setting-up exercises were giving a repeat performance. Almost at once Dee called protestingly from below announcing that she and Akiko had long since finished breakfast. Would I please come along? Akiko was anxious to clear away because she had a typing class later on.

Even so early in the morning, the atmosphere was weighted with an oppressive humidity, so that, as I moved across the room, I could almost feel the heavy, damp air separate for my passage. It was like swimming, or like moving in some slow motion-picture. I was used to New York summers, but this was different; the air seemed actually to be nine parts vapour, so that a creature without gills was in danger of suffocation. Under my bare feet, however, the matting felt silky and cool.

Dee, dressed in a pair of blue-striped cotton pyjamas, with heavy



wooden clogs on her bare feet, was in her dooryard puttering among her pots of nasturtiums and coreopsis. The effect of the open room and the shaded, small garden was delightful; the small leaves sparkled with moisture and splotches of mould made agreeable, cool-looking patches of green on the brown earth. The whole atmosphere was surprisingly tropical and languorous. Dee told me that my breakfast would be along soon. Since she hadn't supposed I would want to go native at once and start the day on fermented bean soup and raw fish, she had asked Akiko to bring me an American breakfast—*tosuto* and *kohi*.

Dee went on to tell me about my American breakfast and the "new" Japanese vocabulary. *Tosuto* and *kohi*, she explained, after spelling them for me, are the Japanese words for toast and coffee. The Japanese, she said, hadn't such foods until Western people introduced them, and even today, they were unknown except to a few people in the larger cities or at the hotels and inns run for foreign tourists. Usually when the Japanese take over foreign things, they take over also the foreign names, adapting them to their own language. Japanese words are formed of simple combinations of two-letter syllables, the second of which is almost always a vowel. Instead of an alphabet, they have a syllabary—ba be bi bo bu; ka ke ki ko ku; and so on. They make foreign words Japanese by adapting them to their syllabary and when necessary adding a final vowel. Since they don't have a syllable "fi" in their syllabary, in order to make coffee a proper Japanese word they had to use the syllable that came nearest, which was "hi." Dee mentioned a number of the "new" words that she especially liked. There was *hamu* for ham; *biru* for beer; *bifu* for beef; *depato* for department store; *apato* for apartment; *mogø* for modern girl; and *mobo* for modern boy; *modan* for modern, and so on. The one she liked most of all was *haikara*. This meant up-to-date; it had been taken from the American expression "high hat," but the Japanese had got mixed up and called it "high collar" instead. Japanese words, she said, were easy to pronounce, since you pronounce every syllable, giving the vowels the European values; that is, *a* is *ah*; *i* is *e*; and *e* is *a*. For example, the word for "thank you"—*arigato* is pronounced *ah-re-gah-toe*.

I told of being awakened by the radio and Dee said I was right in supposing it was a programme of setting-up exercises. Modern Japan was making a fetish of physical culture. It was impossible to go anywhere without coming across some group doing lackadaisical calisthenics. In time, Dee said, it would revolutionize the Japanese physiques, and already the manufacturers were complaining that women were requiring more material for their kimonos than had been considered standard since time immemorial. The radio, Dee went on, was a real curse in Japan. Very few private individuals owned them, but shops used them as advertisements, and placed the loud-speakers on the street, so that they could be heard by all the near-by houses. With paper walls, it was impossible to shut out the din. The government also used the radio constantly for propaganda speeches. In the country villages, where no one could afford a radio, the government put one in the schoolhouse, so that everyone could hear the continual patriotic harangues.

While I ate my breakfast, Dee and I made plans. She said she must go downtown to her job and suggested that I spend the day getting settled at home, becoming acquainted with our neighbourhood by going shopping with Akiko, whose typing class was not till the afternoon. She told me now what I had really never clearly understood—how she had happened to stay in Japan for so long. She had originally come to Tokyo intending to visit her friend Chiyo for a few months, and then go on to China and India, where an uncle in the Anglo-Indian Civil Service had offered hospitality. She found herself staying on, she said, almost without realizing the passage of time. She had become interested in the contradictions and paradoxes that she saw on every hand, and for which no one had an explanation. She set out to make some serious studies of "Things Japanese," but everywhere *mada mada* and *shukan* intruded, slowing her up, presenting a new mystery as the answer for each old one. She tried to write about Japan, she said, and discovered that it was an impossibly difficult task. She could not make any statement about the least important matter on the basis of what she had found to be true in other countries. Every detail of life in Japan was special and different, and before she could write anything without making herself ridiculous, she had to do an enormous

amount of spade-work. Finally she had simply decided to stay on until she felt satisfied, and had taken a job as advisor on French and English usage in one of the great family corporations in order to have financial stability and closer contacts with the Japanese.

I turned the talk to Chiyo, Nobu and Akiko, but these Dee was reluctant to discuss. There was too much to tell all at once, she said, and I would understand so much better after I had seen something of the country. Chiyo was now out of the city, but she would, Dee hoped, come into town soon to meet me. Akiko I would come to know, and she would tell me her story in her own way. As for Nobu, she would say only that he was on the defensive against foreigners, because he felt that they were indifferent to Japanese culture and felt superior to it. His defence took the form of an over-emphasis on the Japanese Mysteries—the Cults of Flowers and Tea, and symbolism in general, and his insistence that no Westerner could understand Japan and Japanese culture because it was too subtle. She said, too, that since Ino's arrest, Nobu was very careful not to discuss any political subject with any foreigner whom he did not know well. Foreigners in Japan, Dee said, were always getting their Japanese friends into trouble by their over-concern about matters with which the average Japanese simply did not concern himself.

Dee insisted, however, that Nobu could not be dismissed merely as a poseur; nor did his desire to escape from the unpleasant or dangerous facts of the Japanese system into an over-preoccupation with the symbolic-ritualistic side of Japan mark him as a cowardly individual. Actually, Dee said, the entire Japanese civilization was a technique for evading reality; such evasions had been bred into the sinew and bone of the Japanese for long centuries, and one of the chief difficulties modern Japan faced in her relations to the Western powers was the inability of the Japanese leaders to understand that today Japan was dealing with actual, rather than imaginary, situations.

We were interrupted by the plaintive notes of a flute, sounding very near at hand. Simultaneously the door was pushed open by a smiling-bowing Akiko who announced: "*Shi-shi.*"

Dee sprang up laughing. "What luck," she said, and led the way

out into the hall. "It's the Japanese libn, a favourite street entertainment!" she explained.

In the vestibule we found a group of mummers. A thin Japanese, dressed in a blue and white cotton kimono and a very large broad-brimmed, droopy, straw hat, was playing a flute. Beside him, a squat, humped figure, muffled in a long multi-coloured robe, was posturing and leaping, holding before his face a huge papier-mâché mask that looked like a grinning dog. Outside, a crowd of children stood staring, expressionless and absorbed. The little girls had crisp bangs, and the little boys a stiff bristle, and their kimonos were bright pinks and reds. Most of the little girls, small as they were, had babies strapped to their backs.

The lion leaped and posed, lunged with his shaggy head, twisting and writhing, snapped its enormous jaws, fierce and amusing at once. A final lunge toward the children brought sudden squeals of pleasant terror. Finally, at a signal from Dee, Akiko dropped some small coins into the flute-player's outstretched hand. The lion removed his head and became a grinning Japanese boy. They bowed repeatedly and went off down the alley pursued by the swarm of children.

Dee went upstairs to dress. As I followed Akiko out to the kitchen to help her clear away, I was remembering similar lion dancers who had, years before, come to entertain us in our Peking courtyard. Seeing them here gave me a warm feeling, and made Japan seem like the Orient at last.

Akiko was washing the breakfast dishes under the cold-water tap in her iron sink. Though conversation between us was difficult, she managed to express her pride in her modern kitchen, and, also, to make it clear that she would not dream of wasting gas to heat water for such an unimportant chore as dish-washing. When she came to the coffee-pot, she shook it, heard the gurgle of coffee and put it away on a shelf, grounds and all. When I suggested that we'd better wash it, Akiko was astonished.

"Is *kohi*," she explained. "Sometimes Miss Dee, he like *kohi* for dinner. Then I put water and make."

"With the same grounds?" I asked.

"*Sodesu*. Yes. Like tea."

*Shukan* again, I thought, and, of course, economy. The Japanese housewife, it seemed, made a pot of tea in the morning, and then whenever anyone wanted a drink during the day, more warm water was added. To throw away grounds that had been used but once was a shocking extravagance, and, as Dee told me later, nothing in the world would persuade Akiko to do so.

There was a cry of "*Moshi moshi!*" at the back door. Akiko opened it to disclose a pleasant-faced young man wearing skin-tight blue trousers stuffed into high rubber boots, and a short cotton jacket open over his bare body. His head was bound in a roll of blue and white towelling to keep the sweat from pouring down into his eyes. He was the iceman. He bent ceremoniously from the waist, exchanged involved greetings with Akiko, and laboriously climbed out of the boots. A large pair of straw slippers stood just inside the door. He got into them, came in, washed the ice carefully in the sink, and placed it in the box. He looked at the rough wooden floor and found that he had sprinkled several drops of water on it. He bowed again apologetically, took the floor cloth from its place under the sink, got down on his knees, mopped up the water, dried the spots carefully, put the cloth away, changed from slippers to boots, bowed, said "*Sayonara,*" and went on to the next modern home.

## 2

Dee had long since gone off downtown. My bed was nicely unmade and my clothes all rehung from the moulding. Akiko came to announce that she was ready to go shopping.

For this occasion, she wore a cool-looking blue and white kimono bound around with an *obi* of figured silk. Her hair was pinned up in a formal chignon, and she carried a bright multi-coloured cotton handkerchief to put the bundles in. In time I was able to gauge by Akiko's costume whether our current activity was the sort habitual with a Japanese or whether it was a "foreign" sort of excursion. For Japanese activities, Akiko always dressed properly in kimono, but when she went off to her typing class, or visited the modernized centre of the city, or acted as my interpreter, she always chose a

blouse and skirt and let her hair hang loose in the short bob affected by the *moga*. Shopping was, of course, a Japanese activity, and Akiko looked, as she was supposed to, like an attractive, conventional housewife.

It seemed odd to walk to the outer door in my stockings and then sit down at the edge of the floor with my feet in the vestibule to put on my shoes. Akiko slid her feet into clogs of polished wood, and, as I watched her slide into them with one quick movement, I resented the bother of lacing mine. From the closet in the vestibule, she chose a huge, rust-red, paper umbrella, good either for sun or rain, whichever the day decided.

As we descended the stone steps to the main street, the drumming which I had heard early in the morning, and off and on ever since, became louder and louder. Directly across from us, a bamboo pavilion had been erected and in it knelt an orchestra of young men making a vigorous racket by pounding small hide drums. Overnight the street had been transformed into a carnival, which all the neighbourhood, apparently, was attending. Each small shop and house was decorated with paper flowers and rosettes, and paper lanterns dangled from staves thrust into the earth beside the street. A number of bamboo pavilions—a raised floor covered with a sloping roof—had been set up at intervals, and these were decorated with lanterns, long pieces of hemp rope, and what looked like a child's attempt to cut jagged streaks of lightning out of white paper. The last two are the Shinto symbols of purification, and I supposed we must be witnessing some Shinto festival. In one of the pavilions was an image of a female figure which Akiko told me represented Amaterasu O-Mikami, the Sun Goddess. Near-by in another pavilion, a group of shaven-headed priests sat cross-legged before a decorated altar and received the gifts presented by the faithful, gifts of *sake* (rice wine), fruit and vegetables.

An officer wearing a uniform and white gloves kept his eye on the taxis and bicycles and trolleys, as down the street came a procession of little girls who marched past us in a vague sort of straggle. They were all dressed up in gay kimonos and flower-decorated absurd paper hats, and looked both silly and sweet as all children in fancy dress do. Behind them came a large, decorated, wooden cart drawn

by a troop of young men, in which another orchestra pounded drums and shrilled on flutes, meanwhile making rhythmic gyrations of a fascinating complexity. Now the traffic officer waved his baton, stopping a trolley and getting a taxi to one side of the road. A gentleman standing beside us wearing a kimono and a Stetson hat, turned to Akiko with an announcement. The "*omikoshi*" was coming.

I looked where the gentleman indicated and saw a group of young men approaching with a large square boxlike structure centred on two long poles that made four handles to carry it by; it was, Akiko explained, the *omikoshi*—the "god's carriage"—the chariot in which the local god was carried from its shrine to visit the neighbourhood. Its passing brought health and good luck to everyone who had contributed to the festival. The god's carriage was a splendid sight—lacquered and gilded and streaming with white paper lightning and strands of hempen rope. The young men wore short white cotton drawers and short blue and white *happi* coats open over bare bodies. They were barefooted and around their heads rolls of blue and white towelling gave the effect of rakish halos. Carrying the god, they came down the street in a frenzied rush, making a wild zigzag from side to side and, despite the traffic officer, barely avoided crashing into a parked taxi. The god inside the carriage, Akiko explained, made the carriage move and sometimes it was too strong for the young men and would overpower them and crash into a house or shop and smash the panels. As the structure paused now for a moment—the young men braced, pushing back against each other, apparently trying to control it—bystanders threw small coins into it, and men dashed out of the little shops to give money and to thrust bottles of *sake* into the outstretched hands of the god's bearers.

Akiko and I set off about our shopping. At the first corner, however, I stopped again. A flight of stone steps led down into a sort of sunken garden that made a courtyard for a large temple, and I wanted to explore. It was a pleasant place, shaded by great trees—a sort of community centre, obviously, since a number of women with babies strapped on their backs were sitting on the steps of the temple, chatting and watching the numerous pigeons. My curiosity was aroused by the action of an old woman who was standing before

a small detached shrine. The shrine was a sloping roof in the form of an inverted V, supported by bamboo poles which sheltered a round stone basin full of water, in the centre of which sat a man-sized stone image. The old woman was scrubbing the belly of this image with a small scrubbing-brush. As we watched she replaced the brush on the edge of the basin among a number of other small brushes, and reaching into a sleeve of her kimono, brought out an incense strip, like a giant red firecracker. As she set this up before the image, I noticed innumerable other pieces, both large and small, decorating the verge of the pond along with the brushes. Akiko explained that the image was a doctor. That is, he was a god that could cure disease, any disease that caused pain, if you rubbed that part of the god which corresponded with your aching member. The old woman had pains in her stomach, so she scrubbed the belly of the god. If she had had a tooth-ache, she would have scrubbed his jaw.

Akiko now led the way across the main street. Directly ahead of us a narrow muddy road branched off at a diagonal and curved behind the row of small shops facing the main street. Down this road Akiko went, her high clogs protecting her feet from the mud, leading me into a labyrinth of winding criss-crossing alleys, tightly packed with minute shops and houses, congested and busy as an ant-hill. We penetrated this maze, turned a corner or two, and I was so thoroughly lost that I wondered if I should ever be able to wander through our neighbourhood unescorted. However, it was a fine place for seeing how the other half lived. The little one- and two-storey structures were pressed tightly together, all wide open in the front, all clinging close to the alley, so that practically every detail of living was performed in public. The buildings all seemed to be constructed on the same ingenious plan: a wooden frame, fitted with sliding panels, supporting a tin roof. The interior was simply a platform, raised about a foot and a half from the ground. Sometimes this platform extended the full width of the walls and fronted directly on the alley; sometimes it took up only one-third of the space, or one-half, or three-fourths, leaving between the platform and the alley a stretch of hard-packed earth as a sort of covered front door-yard. This space was used as a shop or work-room. When the



platform was flush with the alley, it made an open room that looked startlingly like an interior set on a stage.

Akiko went first into a *sakayana*—a fishmonger's shop, where the proprietor, a dignified gentleman in a grey kimono, sat cross-legged beside a brazier, gently waving a yellow fan, and sipping tea. In the background, a woman was nursing a baby. To the left of the entrance was a sunken pool where the fish were swimming about. The pool was fed from a pipe, and the water flowed out into a narrow, fetid stream and on behind the shop. To the right of the entrance, a young man stood at a wooden counter cleaning fish. He slit the gills, removed the head, sliced off the scales with a clean, firm sweep, neatly opened the body with a rapid rip along the ventral edge, removed the entrails with no probing of his knife, dropped the dissected fish into a pail of water, and grasped another with a rhythm as perfect, as routinized, and as rapid as a machine.

From among the fish in the pool Akiko chose what she called an *amadaï*, a long flat fellow of a lovely lavender colour. She indicated the two fish she had selected to the assistant, who, with a long-handled net, swept them up and hurled them, gasping, on to his table. As he thrust his knife into their throbbing gill openings, I turned hurriedly away. Akiko, however, watched with an indifferent, somewhat calculating gaze, wondering, I suppose, if two would be enough, since this new foreigner had so large an appetite.

The fish cleaned, the clerk placed them on a strip of bamboo, tied them with a narrow bamboo fibre, wrapped a large green leaf around them and folded them in a final cornucopia of newspaper which Akiko tied up in her coloured handkerchief. They both bowed. The proprietor now arose and came to the edge of the platform. Bowing formally, Akiko gave him some coins. They exchanged bows again, outdoing each other in politeness. As we left the shop, the clerk dumped a pile of fish heads out of a wooden box on to his slab, and with a skilful gouge retrieved the eyes, which quivered in a glittering pile beside him, a delicacy for some lucky Japanese dinner.

We poked into one similar little shop after another, looking at the vegetables and fruit, the peanuts and pistachios, the beanjelly candy, the dried fish that looked like splinters of wood, the tremendous white radishes that looked like elephants' tusks. We bought

five tomatoes for three sen, a bundle of miniature spinach, each spray separate and manicured, a handful of small, hard peachés—fruit, Akiko said, was expensive—and a bottle of soybean sauce for salt. These, along with hard biscuits, rice and noodles, dried seaweed, and tea, were almost all the edibles available. When I thought to do some extra shopping on my own, I found there was nothing else to buy. The “new” words, *tosuto* and *kohi*, had not penetrated here, and the shops did not carry either bread or coffee. For these, and for such things as milk, butter, or meat, it was necessary to go to the foreignized shops in the heart of the city. Our neighbours, it seemed, had no use for such foreign luxuries and were content with the national staple diet—bean soup, cereal, fish and pickle, with soybean sauce for seasoning, and beanjelly candy for a treat.

The small open rooms were not only homes and shops, but were also factories, and even foundries, where a whole family, with perhaps an apprentice or two, were all working to produce some small manufacture—canvas tops for sneakers, parts for bicycles, small wooden toys, pottery. We paused to watch a family group. The master of the house was sitting cross-legged beside a brazier of charcoal, taking a puff from a long pipe. Slightly behind him, the rest of the family knelt in a row, a middle-aged woman with a baby strapped on her back, two young girls, and a boy. They were all busily sticking advertisements on small wooden match-boxes, working swiftly, with a smooth, mechanical deftness.

“*Taihen ne!*” Akiko exclaimed, paying an involuntary tribute to their dexterity. The matron looked at us without expression as she paused for a moment to pour herself a cup of pale tea from a little pot that rested beside the brazier, sipped briefly, and returned to her work impassively.

Their home-workshop was typical, and looking at it, I could understand how “modern” and extravagant Dee’s home really was. This house was empty of furnishings, and the family’s few possessions—probably mattresses and bedding, a few bowls and chopsticks, an extra kimono or two—were kept, when not in use, in the closets. The whole family lived and worked in that one small room, sleeping at night on mattresses spread out side by side, and cooking on the charcoal brazier. Their only modern convenience was a solitary

electric light swinging on a cord. How the mistress must get her water we saw as we walked on, passing the central faucet that supplied the neighbourhood, around which old women in kimono and wooden clogs were waiting with wooden pails. However, she could buy hot water, hauled through the streets by a vendor in a creaking cart, with a stove arrangement like our bathtub. Where she took her bath, we saw at the next turn—a public bathhouse—a low weather-beaten grey frame structure divided, I could see through the open front, into two sections, one for gentlemen and one for ladies. Akiko translated the sign pasted outside: "Adults, 5 sen; children, 3 sen; babies, 1 sen." It was bad, she said, to take babies to the public baths. Sometimes, she said, the babies "make a mistake in the bath."

We wandered on, following one turn after another as something just beyond kept catching my attention. The land rose and fell in continuous shallow hills, and the alleys in places became flights of stone steps, ascending or descending. The little houses clung to the land, followed the flights of stone, in some places so crowded for space that the roadway passed under the roof of a house. Of privacy, there was obviously none at all. Never, I thought, had humanity lived and worked together so many in such little space.

Was this, I wondered, the "real Japan"? Would Nobu accept this as the "Japanese Way"? And if so, just what did it add up to, just what did this swarming community mean in terms of human beings living together? There was primitivism, there was the mud that had ruined my white canvas shoes, and there was the fetid stream that coiled about among the little houses and that I saw used as a toilet. This was squalor. And yet, curiously enough, the houses themselves did not seem squalid. Because of their emptiness, and because of the clean-looking straw mats, they had an air of order, and even spaciousness. There was about the place, too, a sense of communal sharing of occupations, and, of course, a complete lack of physical solitude. That matron, standing in the alley, washing her kimono, with her children in bright red and pink kimonos rolling on a scrap of matting at her feet, was in the centre of the life of her neighbourhood. And if the matron next door, kneeling at the edge of her living-room, sewing, seemed to me a character on a stage,

from her own point of view her position was reversed, and she held a free seat in a box from which to keep an eye on the show.

It was, moreover, a colourful sort of show. Matrons wandered about shopping, their decorative kimonos tied up out of the mud, their coloured umbrellas sullen in the grey light, their multicoloured bundles swinging. A bean-curd vendor came along pulling his cart, blowing his plaintive flute. A vendor of flowers hauled his bright blooms in a trailer behind a bicycle. A group of pilgrims, dressed in long white robes, their faces concealed under large, conical straw hats, pounded drums as they wandered from shop to shop, collecting alms. There was drumming in the distance, the sound of gongs, the cries of vendors and bicyclists. This was the swarming, congested, colourful life that is associated with the European cities in the Middle Ages, with, however, one great difference—there was here no boisterousness, no noise, no sense of lusty interplay between individuals, no quarrelling. These people were, on the whole, as silent as ants, moving about their affairs with no appearance of either pleasure or distaste. So many people so close together, and so little evidence of friction! Was this really true, I wondered. And, if so, how was it possible?

## 3

If I had learned that Tokyo's civilization was primitive, I had also learned that it was picturesque. It was the picturesqueness that triumphed altogether that evening when, following dinner, Akiko, Dee and I went out to view our neighbourhood festival.

During dinner—to the accompaniment of the beat of near-by drumming—Dee had explained that our festival was one of a constant round of such celebrations. Every temple and shrine in the city—and there were hundreds—had an *ennichi* or small fair once or twice a month, and an *o-matsuri* or great explosive festival once or twice a year, so that there was always some such celebration within reach for every inhabitant of the city. Akiko seemed as anxious as I to get out and see what was going on, which surprised me since I supposed such festivals must be an old story to her. But Dee explained that Japanese *shukan*—laid down in the seventeenth

century—had forbidden women under forty to attend festivals. Even today, it was not *shukan* for a younger woman to go unless chaperoned by her husband and baby, or mother-in-law, so that Akiko had not gone to festivals since her childhood until she came to live with Dee. It was all right for her to go with us, because escorting foreigners to view Japanese customs was considered a patriotic activity.

The ribbons and rosettes dangling from all the doors in the neighbourhood, including our own, meant we all had contributed a small sum to the occasion, for these festivals were community celebrations and the expense and the good luck descended alike on all.

Akiko led the way to a side street where, on both sides, small stalls had been erected, decorated with paper flowers, wind glasses and lanterns; between the stalls, scraps of matting had been spread out on the earth road, and both stalls and mats were covered with an incredible assortment of objects useful and curious.

Slowly between this double row of stalls, innumerable people wandered in gay kimonos and colourful clogs, admiring the beautiful landscapes modelled from old newspapers, the miniature pine-trees rooted in thimble-sized pots, the shell animals, the fascinating moving-toys—airplanes spinning on invisible wires, gunboats tearing around in tubs of water, jugglers, acrobats, wrestlers—in short, all the glittering, colourful, ingenious, fantastic, small objects that delight the Japanese. There were practical things, such as dishes and chopsticks. There were covers torn from American magazines; there were little gifts of carved wood or bamboo to present to the shrine god; and there were countless lucky charms to protect the purchaser against every disaster, from being robbed by burglars, or struck by lightning, to childlessness.

There were all sorts of side-shows. An elderly man in kimono sat cross-legged on a scrap of matting solemnly blowing soap-bubbles. A little farther on, a dignified woman with a fantastically complicated coiffure sat on a camp-stool before a small table on which was spinning a solitary top. Beyond that was a sort of shooting-alley where small boys and men threw balls at moving ducks. At the end of the street, a troop of masked comics performed traditional acrobatics.

It was actually a sort of Japanese Coney Island set up for a day or two for the amusement of the neighbourhood, costing them nothing but the fifty sen or so which was the usual household contribution to pay for decorations and presents for the shrine or temple. The vendors and acrobats, of course, followed these festivals around the city and were satisfied if they made a few yen from each festival. The pleasure came from the feeling of mingling with one's fellows, of being, moreover, part of the spectacle—for these people with their bright-coloured high clogs, their colourful kimonos, their waving fans, their constant ceremonial bowing as they greeted neighbour and friend, seemed almost consciously to be acting a role, playing a predetermined part in a well-rehearsed drama. And here, I thought, was the chief difference between this festival and an American country fair, or Coney Island. This whole scene, because of the miniature quality of everything—toys and booths and people alike, because of the picturesque costumes and the ritualistic customs, made an effect that was as finished in a theatrical sense as though the scene had been deliberately created for the stage. It was, however, a silent stage, a stage set for a pantomime. The whole scene had a subdued, almost dreamlike quality, and the people seemed like puppets rather than living flesh and blood. There was little talk, no laughter. The sounds were the insects shrilling beside the road, the loud banging of the wooden stick with which a vendor was calling attention to the small green bananas he was selling, the distant beat of drums, the occasional music of a victrola record playing a Japanese version of American jazz.

Our strolling had brought us to a tall wooden archway—the *torii*, which in Japan always announces a shrine or temple—and we passed under it, into a spreading enclosure. Here, Dee told me, was the temple that was holding its *o-matsuri*. The grounds of the temple made a considerable park, shaded by towering cryptomeria trees, and a scene similar to that we had come through along the street was spread out on either side of a long stone walk leading to the temple structure. We joined the stream of worshippers moving slowly toward the temple. Before approaching it, each worshipper paused beside a trough of water under a bamboo roof, dipped water with a long-handled dipper and poured it over his hands, and then



made unceasing monotonous music, and the old women beat the accent.

As a spectacle, it was magic. The dim, swinging lanterns, the spreading trees, the drums, the shrill insect noises were all part of it; but the important elements in the effect were the kimonos, and the humid weighted atmosphere. The dance was only the monotonous repetition of a few simple steps, yet it seemed both mysterious and subtle, because of the concealing long skirts, and the rippling sleeves that made a new pattern with the slightest movement; while the weighted air seemed actually to retard the gestures so that the undulating arms resembled the tentacles of those under-water plants that sway and drift against the lazy currents of tropical waters. It might have been taking place under the sea.

The black sullen night closed around the silent circle of spectators and the ring of dancers. The music went on with no interruption, and the dancers moved untiringly around in the circle, their faces expressionless, like sleep-walkers.

On the way home I said to Dee: "The dancing was fascinating." "That's just what they hope," she said. "It's propaganda, you know." She went on to explain that the *Odori* is a Shinto folk dance common in rural Japan. There are innumerable different variations of the same few basic movements, and almost every little village in the country has its own version which the villagers dance at festivals. Originally it had meant dancing around in a circle to summon some agricultural deity to make the crops grow or to make the weather fine for planting and so on, and even today, in the country, the dancing is part of the fertility and harvest festivals. This sort of native custom that had been part of Japanese civilization for centuries had, of course, practically disappeared in the cities. The government, however, had decided that the people must not be allowed to neglect their ancient customs. They therefore had set up a Bureau whose job it was to encourage revivals of customs that were dying out, and to popularize other customs that had formerly been the diversions of the upper classes. To popularize the *Odori*, they had a famous geisha sing one of the dance tunes for a phonograph record and issued with the record a leaflet with pictures describing the postures, so everybody could learn the steps. The Bureau also encouraged the



old women, who remembered the dance from their village days, to demonstrate it in the temple courtyards around the city, and featured the dance at various special festivals. Actually, the thing had caught on like mad—the people seemed to love it—and wherever you went around the city, you found these dancing circles. Only, of course, in a city the dance was nothing but a picturesque waving of the arms, whereas, in the country, it had definite meaning and value.

"Do you remember Nobu eating time and space?" Dee went on. His posture, she said, was one common throughout the East, and, combined with breathing exercises and discipline, was used by various religious sects as a kind of yoga, a technique of communion with the Divine. In Japan, however, the pose usually meant nothing so serious. It was merely an elaboration of a habitual posture, cross-legged, hands resting on the knees, called "meditative-sitting," which meant, really, to sit quietly in pleasant idleness with the mind blank. Today, the government propagandists were trying to turn this "meditative-sitting" into a national Cult, and were encouraging people to practise the rite by themselves, and to form organizations to practise it together. Dee added ironically that the government probably reasoned that a man sitting cross-legged, thinking of nothing, was up to no mischief.

It seemed astonishing that a government should concern itself with such trivial matters. But Dee assured me that they were not trivial to the Japanese. I would find, she said, that there were few things in Japan that were not of concern to some department of the government or some one of the ruling cliques.

#### 4

The next afternoon we had a neighbourhood fire. I was sitting in my room, reading a brochure on Flower Arrangement, when there sounded near at hand the screeching wail of sirens followed at once by the appearance of Akiko to announce a fire and suggest we go and look at it. I am not, by temperament, addicted to fires, but Akiko seemed so eager that I agreed to go.

The fire turned out to be in a modern-style school, a "higher"

school for boys, that was, fortunately, isolated from the tiny paper houses of the neighbourhood by a yard and a stone wall. There was a highly efficient fire-department on the job with some chemical-squirting apparatus; the fire seemed trivial—there were no flames visible; and since there was nothing to look at, I was about to suggest to Akiko that we return home, when there was a great commotion. Through the crowd that parted to admit them there rushed a band of some seven or eight strange-looking figures wearing large papier-mâché masks resembling the devil-masks of the Chinese theatre, and waving bright banners on tall poles. They rushed toward the building and, mingling with the firemen, began to shout and leap about, waving their banners with the greatest excitement. These, Akiko said, were the *shobo*. Because of her interest in the scene, her explanation could go no farther.

That evening, when Dee came home, I asked her about these masked *shobo*. "They're firemen," she said. "Volunteers from the community. They belong to a regular organization made up from our neighbours, and their duty is to attend all fires and help put them out."

She paused as though they were explanation enough, and then, smiling at my bewilderment, went on to say that they were chasing away the fire-devils; that this method of fighting fire by scaring devils was an ancient custom that still persisted despite the modern fire-department. And although they were actually a nuisance and frequently interfered with the work of the modern department, the neighbourhood belief in their efficacy was so strong that the city had never been able to forbid them.

Our neighbourhood, Dee explained, was actually a self-sufficient, largely self-governed small community—a sort of village or town. The whole city was made up of such communities tied together and connected with the modernized central city by the system of motorized transportation. In each community there were groups of men appointed by their neighbours whose duty it was to see to the orderly conduct of the settlement. Within the settlement were certain temples and shrines erected in honour of the local deity of the place, and all the people who lived in that neighbourhood and worshipped that particular deity were considered to be related by

blood to the deity, and so to each other. Life in the village was largely a community affair; each household contributed as a matter of course to the neighbourhood weddings and funerals and to the local shrine celebrations. Every individual in the section was considered to have definite duties and privileges depending on his occupation, and all individuals were considered equal because they were equally related to the god. The baron who resided on our hill-top was the most important person in our settlement, but he also owed certain definite obligations to the community; and once every year he entertained the whole neighbourhood at a party in his garden, dispensing ices and tea and cold rice balls and greeting everyone. The *shobo* I had just seen was one of the numerous village organizations that managed village affairs. There were, however, Dee added, other more practical groups.

It seemed astonishing to find this sort of fantasy, and even this sort of community organization, in the heart of a modern city, and I said so to Dee. She answered that there were two very different Japans, existing side by side, and, moreover, altogether different from each other. There was the "immemorial Japan" that had existed for centuries, and there was the twentieth-century Japan that the Japanese called *modan* (which was, of course, their "new" word for modern). This *modan* Japan was, she said, a copy of Western civilization—how good a copy, I should soon see for myself.

### III

#### MODAN JAPAN

THE next day, it was arranged that I should meet Dee downtown to dine in the modern centre of the city in order to see *modan* Japan. I was prepared for this expedition—a half-hour bus ride—somewhat as though I were an explorer venturing into an uncharted region. First, Dee and Akiko consulted together, concocting instructions which they wrote down on a card, in both Japanese characters and English, and presented to me as a kind of identification disk, so that if, by some misadventure, I should miss Dee, I should be able to get

home. Then Dee spread out on the mats a large tourist map of the city; I knelt beside her; and she proceeded to give me a lecture on how to find my way around Tokyo.

I must forget, she said, the usual custom of finding a given place by using its postal address. The streets and alleys of Tokyo were usually not named, and house numbers were assigned according to the time they were erected, rather than by position. That is, if several houses were built at approximately the same time, they were all numbered the same. All the houses on our alley had the same number. The postman, like everybody else, found an address by trial and error, by intuition and memory. The city—Dee pointed to the map—was divided into large sections called *Ku*. These *Ku* were divided into smaller sections called *machi* and *chome*; and since the same character was used to write both *machi* and *chome*, not even a Japanese could explain how they decide which you are living in. A postal address gave merely your *machi-chome* and *Ku*; that is, it told which part of what section. It was general; not specific.

Fortunately, there was, in every section, a police-box handily situated, and the police, of course, knew everybody in their section and where they lived. They could always, in a pinch, direct you.

I would find, Dee went on, that while few of the streets had names, the important bus- and trolley-stops did have. These, however, like the stations on the elevated, were in Japanese characters. A few of those most often used by tourists were written in the Western alphabet, but only a few. On the map, however, the *Ku*'s and the most important traffic stops all over the city were so written, and by studying them, I would in time be able to find any given section. To find a given house, however, I would simply have to hunt. This was true, of course, for Japanese as well as foreigners, so that I could not count on taxis to get me places, except the few very well-known hotels, government departments, theatres, and so on. As a matter of fact, there were great parts of the city where no taxi could possibly go. The city was built on a hundred hills, and once off the main thoroughfares, the streets quickly became narrow alleys, or even flights of stone steps. The Japanese, who had a nice sense of humour, had coined a "new" word to describe the situation and would tell you that the way to reach a certain place was to *taxi*.

To "*texi*" meant to "not-take-a-taxi," or, in other words, to walk. The Japanese walked or used bicycles. The vast majority, of course, remained within their own section, where they worked, lived, and found their recreation locally.

After I had somewhat digested this information, Dee led me by a circuitous path up to the baron's estate on the hill behind our house. There, at the edge of his small park, immediately above our house, was a "viewing" bench, from which we had a fine panorama of the city spread out at our feet. The social organization of the city, Dee said, closely followed the topography, so that the gentry lived on the summits of the little hills, the bourgeoisie clung to the middle slopes, while in the hollows swarmed the masses.

Dee pointed now to the south-east, toward the modern centre of the city where I was, later on, to meet her. There, marking the exact centre of Tokyo, was the Imperial Palace, a shrine housing a living god. As I looked down over the waves of little houses, the endless sea of grey splashed with the green of frequent shrine and temple, and thought of an Emperor-god enshrined in the heart of the modern city, I had an odd sense of living in two worlds, which is, I had already learned, the characteristic atmosphere of Japan.

## 2

Akiko had written out, in Japanese characters, the names of our bus-stop, our *Ku* and *chome*, and, to be quite safe, the name of a large boys' school around the corner and the name of our best-known temple. She now wrote one word, "*Mitsu-koshi*," and taught me to say it, for this was the name of the bus-stop where I was to meet Dee. It was also, I was relieved to learn, the terminal of this particular line. This done, in the late afternoon, Akiko escorted me around the corner to the bus-stop, indicating landmarks on the way, waited till the bus came and saw me on it. From her manner, I judged she expected never to see me again.

It was a miniature bus made for small people. The roof just missed my head, and I am only five feet three. It was crowded with men in kimonos wearing American-style felt or straw hats; with

women in kimonos, most of them with babies strapped to their backs; and with young men in Western-style, dark uniforms. The young men sat while the women (carrying their babies and, usually, large bundles tied up in bright-coloured, cotton handkerchiefs) stood in the narrow aisle. The heat was intense, and most of the gentlemen were waving small fans. The women, however, despite their constricting *obi* and the weight of their sprawling babies, seemed insensible of any discomfort.

The driver of the bus was a man, but the conductor was a young woman dressed in a uniform of dark blue with pleated skirt and jacket and a knitted cap pinned far back on her head. She bowed before every passenger, collecting fares; chattering meanwhile in an unceasing falsetto monotone which I later learned told not only the names of the bus-stops, but also described the points of interest along the route. Whenever the bus stopped, she stood rigid and bowed to every descending passenger, collecting his ticket, and saying thank you. To say it, she had to enunciate the whole of *arigato zai mashita*, yet, if there were a half-dozen descending simultaneously, the last one received as elongated a farewell, as 'courteous a bow, as had the first. Whenever we passed another bus, the drivers saluted each other, and the conductors exchanged bows.

Dee was waiting for me at the terminal. I joined her, feeling that in that half-hour's journey I had covered several centuries, for we might now have been in any large, modern city. Along the kerb of the broad paved street before us were parked a number of sleek motor-cars. Across the way was an eight-storey stone building that filled the block. Behind us another, its great doors guarded by stone lions like those I had seen at Trafalgar Square in London. This spot, Dee told me, was the heart of modern Tokyo, Wall Street and Fifth Avenue combined. Opposite was *Mitsui Gomei Kaisha*, housing the bank and offices of the Mitsui interests, most important of Japan's great family-corporations; behind us, the Mitsukoshi, the *Mitsui depato* (department store), the largest and most modern shopping centre in the city. At this last news, I was tempted to go shopping at once, but Dee pointed out that the store was closed. *Depato* in Tokyo are open on Sundays and closed on every day in the month that had "eight" in it. Since this was the "eighth" I

should have to postpone my shopping till another day.

However, we had an hour or two to spend before dinner-time, and Dee suggested that we *taxi* to our restaurant so that I could view the city. We started off. A walk of two blocks, and a turn of a corner, took us back from the twentieth century to the medieval world of our neighbourhood. The broad, paved sidewalk narrowed and became an arcade lined with minute, open shops stocked with radishes, beanjelly candy, and fish swimming in tubs. As we passed along, the proprietor of one of the stalls came out with a pail of water which he threw, regardless of the passers-by, to dampen the walk and give a bit of freshness to the sticky air. Ahead of us, a matron lifted her dampened kimono skirt delicately and bowed to him, apparently apologizing for having been in the way.

Another block or so brought us out on to a bridge that spanned a narrow canal and led, Dee explained, to the Ginza, Tokyo's Broadway. The scene from this bridge, she said, leading the way to the railing, was worth looking at, for it was typical of the kind of startling contrast characteristic of the city. I saw what she meant at once. Along the margin of the canal, an apparently endless row of weather-beaten, wooden houses leaned against each other at precarious angles like some ramshackle Venice, and on their balconies, bits of drying red and blue and pink laundry made a homely contrast to the large business buildings directly behind them. The canal itself was lively with traffic, for it was, Dee explained, one of a system of such waterways that criss-crossed the central city and served as a link in the communications system. It served, too, as the outlet into which the sewage of the central city drained. Down the odorous waters of the canal came a constant flow of craft—barges, for the most part, poled by grimy men standing in the stern, often assisted by women with babies strapped to their backs. Similar barges were moored alongshore and we could see their occupants carrying on the details of living—cooking over small charcoal braziers, scrubbing clothes in wooden tubs, while children crawled over the coal, or mud, or straw, or whatever freight the barge might happen to carry. Thousands of people, Dee told me, lived on such barges, and they were one of Tokyo's chief social problems, acknowledged as such by the government that regularly appointed committees to investigate

and recommend ways of improving conditions. But, Dee went on, like slum-clearance projects in many lands, such reports were duly noted, docketed, filed away, and forgotten.

We walked along the Ginza where the buildings were stone and stucco and plate-glass, many of them modernistic in design, and decorated with advertising signs in neon-tubing. The street was swarming with people—the women usually in kimono, the men in kimono with felt or straw hats, or in Western suits. There were numerous young men in dark uniforms and Dee told me they were university students—that all students in Japan, from primary school up, were required to wear uniforms—blue or black suits for the boys and young men, and middies and skirts or bloomers for the girls. There were occasionally comic-strip touches in the costumes, as when we passed a young woman in a Western-style suit, but wearing wooden clogs on bare feet, and another one, who had reversed the order, and wore high-heeled shoes with her kimono. We passed one couple—the man wearing plus fours, cotton stockings, and a sweater—followed a few paces behind by a lady in kimono with a piled coiffure, delicious, peach-coloured, flat silk sandals, and a great, multicoloured bundle. She was unquestionably his wife, Dee said, pointing out that it is the custom in Japan for the man of the house to walk slightly ahead of his lady.

Dee now led the way across the street, and went down a narrow alley between two large buildings. *Modan* Japan had vanished and we were back in a labyrinth of narrow winding lanes, bordered with doll-houses of bamboo and paper, small restaurants and shops, hung with lanterns and decorated with potted plants which were sprinkled with egg-shells to keep away the devils. Here were silks and hand-made paper, colour prints, lacquer, and hand-painted *obis*, a frivolous, miniature, picturesque Japan that seemed completely unaware of the plate-glass and neon-tubing so near at hand.

We rounded a corner and came upon what looked like a little park, entered by a *torii*, the gate that signifies a shrine. Looking through the archway, we saw a small, wooden structure decorated with Shinto purification symbols. In front of the building were two stone images of foxes, while other fox statues stood about the enclosure. This was, Dee explained, a shrine sacred to Inari, the



Fox God, a powerful deity in Japan, believed capable of bewitching the unwary, a deity to be placated.

I stared at the stone foxes fascinated—for a moment forgetting all about *modan* Japan, for the Fox is a favourite character in Japanese legends, plays and fairy-tales, and I had often read about this deity's strange exploits. But I had thought of this kind of belief as belonging to a Japan that had vanished, and it seemed strange to find this shrine here in the heart of the modern part of this capital city.

"Do the Japanese still worship the Fox?" I asked Dee. "Do they still believe in his magic powers?"

"As you see." Dee pointed to the little cloth bibs that were tied around the necks of the images. They were put there, she said, by women to propitiate the god, and get his help so that child-birth would be painless. There was one Inari shrine in the city, she said, that actually carried on a mail-order business because its Fox charms were supposed to be so powerful that people sent for them from all over the country.

I persisted. "Are such beliefs held only by certain classes of people, or are they still general?"

In answer, Dee told of having seen a questionnaire recently issued by the government and sent to all the girls' high schools. One of the questions asked was: "Do you believe the Fox God can bewitch you?" This was significant because the girls who went to high school were a very small proportion of the population, and most of them came from well-to-do families who would be expected—if any families were—to be Westernized and *modan*. If the government thought that such girls still believed the old legends, it was certain most of the others did.

We strolled on, for a bewildering and fascinating hour, ostensibly viewing *modan* Japan, yet not permitted to forget for a moment that Westernization was foreign to this country. We passed a factory that manufactured dry ice; it was, however, hardly a block distant from the Fox Shrine. We saw a *modan*-style movie-theatre where the picture featured Harold Lloyd; but he was talking in Japanese, for they Nipponized the sound track. We stopped for a *dryu martini* in a *modan*-style café-restaurant that represented a Japanese idea of Hollywood, and sat under beach-umbrellas on canvas-chairs, labelled

across the backs with the names of American movie stars. The Japanese who patronized this place, however, as Dee explained, did so only to sample American culture, as in New York the American might dine in a Japanese *sukiyaki* restaurant. The patrons, I thought, seemed dreadfully bored. We were the only women, and the other guests—students in uniform and men in Western clothes—sat moodily sipping what Dee explained was coffee with condensed milk in it, cold but not iced, since ice is too great a luxury, a drink that they believed was very popular in America.

### 3

We dined on the Ginza, Tokyo's Broadway, in a *modan* restaurant that would have looked inconspicuous in New York. The outside was plate-glass and a Neon sign; the inside, a succession of booths against the walls, and tables in the middle—all American to the glass sugar-shakers and paper napkins in thick water glasses. The little maids wore beige cotton uniforms—very ugly with their complexions—and one of them chewed constantly on a dangling bit of blue-decorated cotton cloth, a Japanese equivalent of chewing-gum, Dee explained. Since this restaurant represented Japanese-New York, the menus were printed in what the Japanese supposed was English, and we had a choice of "Boiled chaines," or "Three cose rice with pickle." Since we could not discover what these were, we ordered *sukiyaki*.

The service was interminably slow. We received tea with condensed milk already in it (which is the way, Dee explained, that the Japanese suppose all foreigners drink it), and it was a long struggle before we could get the green tea we desired. The waitress brought the utensils for cooking the *sukiyaki* and the ingredients, one at a time, with long pauses between, and it was almost an hour before she got the dish properly cooking. I occupied myself looking at the other patrons. Again they were all men, except ourselves, and again they were all wearing Western clothes or uniforms. A group of university students at a table near us kept looking in our direction, apparently discussing us. At last one of them caught my eye, looked away quickly in apparent embarrassment, seemed to consult with

his friends, then rose and came over to our table. He bowed to me and said: "Please, may I speak with you?"

Delighted with this adventure, I bowed in return and said: "Please."

"Please, what do you think of Japan?" he asked.

"Very interesting," I replied. "What do you think of America?"

"*Sa!* America?" He paused and frowned in an effort of concentration. Finally, he brought out slowly: "America fine country. You have Henry Ford." A moment, then he went on: "Please, what does America think of Japan?"

I answered: "America thinks Japan is a very interesting country, but Americans do not like what is going on in Manchuria."

At this the young man stiffened as though I had struck him, and his eyes looked away. "I am sorry," he said, "but that is a subject about which I have no opinion." He turned on his heel, and went back to his friends.

"Just a student practising his English," Dee explained. She went on to say that I must expect it to happen constantly, but I must not expect it to be conversation. There were certain questions they always asked, really a lesson learned, and they were not at all interested in answers, certainly not answers beyond the merely conventional exchange of polite courtesies.

Our *sukiyaki* was ready at last—a mess of fat, very tough beef, some long, leafy onions, a few balls of beef fat, and a handful of dried chrysanthemum blossoms, drenched in sweet *sake* and soy-bean sauce. We ate with forks. A large cabinet victrola stood conspicuously in the middle of the place, and one of the little maids kept it playing constantly, giving us a programme of Western music. She was obviously unfamiliar with the music and chose the records at random so that a movement from the middle of a Brahms symphony was followed by "Blue Moon." When our waitress finally gave us our check, she said "O.K." This word, Dee assured me, was perfectly good Japanese, for they had accepted it as a "new" word and spelt it *okai*. The "Overture to William Tell" pursued us to the door.

It was a relief to be outside again, and a vast and agreeable surprise. While we had been dining, the Ginza had been transformed

from a dull *modan* street into a Japanese carnival like our neighbourhood fair. There were the same swinging lanterns, the same booths and scraps of matting, displaying the same silly, colourful, small toys and magic charms. The street was swarming with pedestrians in kimonos who were, Dee assured me, engaged in a favourite Tokyo pastime called *ginbura*, which means "to wander vaguely from booth to booth along the Ginza." We joined the strollers, gazing at the novelties, and I was admiring the skill of a little girl who was putting on a show with a puppet—a head, arms, and a long gown, into which her hand fitted—when I heard Dee say, "Why, hello, whatever are you doing here?" I looked up to find her shaking hands with a man wearing Western clothes, who, at first sight, looked like an amiable boxer; his nose was flattened as though by a blow, and a jagged scar ran across his left cheek. He was talking to Dee in excellent English, and his manner was relaxed and friendly, a contrast to the antagonism and tension I had felt with Nobu. Dee introduced him as Mr. Sato, a friend of Akiko's husband, and, she said, a newspaperman who had studied journalism at Columbia University. When Dee told him that we were viewing *modan* Tokyo, he asked permission to join us.

Choosing at random, we dropped into a small café with a sign at the door reading "Modan Bar—Café Cherrio." It was a small room with a bar at one end, a few large leather arm-chairs grouped around minute tables, and a number of booths along one wall. We were the only guests, and were welcomed as we entered by a group of five or six little Japanese maids, some in Western evening dress—slinky satin or crisp taffeta—and some in kimono. Those in kimono bowed low, and those in evening dress said: "Hello." They ushered us to a table, got us seated, and then arranged themselves around us like a group posing for an old-fashioned photographer—some standing, some kneeling, some sitting. They stared at us without speaking; looking, I thought, like a group of puppets dressed to show the difference between Japanese and Western costume.

"Do you speak English?" I asked of the group at large.

"*Okaï*," said one:

Another said, "Please," and they all burst into a fit of giggles, doubling over like india-rubber dolls, only to freeze into immobility

once more. Mr. Sato addressed them in Japanese and reported back that I had heard the extent of their English vocabulary, though one of them, it turned out, could also say: "Thank you."

It was maddening not to be able to talk to them, for I felt that I should like nothing better than to join them in a good giggle.

"What are we supposed to do with them?" I asked.

"Oh, we'll buy them a drink," said Mr. Sato, and handed me a list of drinks, which was printed in Japanese-English. A column headed "*Cocataru*," which meant cocktail, listed such mysteries as: "Dreems," "Coronation," "East Indian," "Knock Out," and "Monkey Gland." We could also have "jinger ale," "Hoss Neck," "jon collines," "prain soda," "brandi koborà," or "biru." Choosing a *cocataru* at random, I asked: "What is in Dreems?"

Mr. Sato passed along the question to our hostesses, two of whom scurried over and took the matter up with the bartender. After a lengthy discussion, punctuated by bursts of giggles and doublings, they returned to announce that "Dreems" contained vermouth and brandy. "Then what is in Coronation? In Knock Out?" I persisted. One at a time was all they could manage, and after each question, there was the same business of running to the bar, the consultation with the bartender and the giggles. It was a fine game. But all the drinks were the same, vermouth and brandy; it was only the name that was different! We finally ordered *biru*, and our hostesses chose the same. Filling this large order required many giggles and many excursions to and fro, but finally we were all settled, the six hostesses in a frozen group, each clutching a glass and gazing at us with the blankness of masks.

They made me somewhat uncomfortable. To conquer this, I turned to Sato and said that I didn't see how the management could afford so many hostesses for so few customers.

"*Sa!*" Sato exclaimed, and laughed. "They don't cost the management anything. They only get tips, you know."

"But how can they make enough to live on when there are no customers?"

"Oh, they live at home, of course. If they make a yen or two a week, they will be pleased. They give it to their families, and perhaps their families save it for their trousseaux."

I was contrasting the lives of these girls with that of night-club hostesses in New York, and I suppose I looked somewhat bewildered. For Sato went on: "These girls are *modan* women, of course, but you must not expect them to be unconventional. They will marry the men their families choose for them, like proper Japanese daughters."

Sato turned and began to talk to them in Japanese. They stared at him blankly, answering when addressed directly, then freezing into immobility. Only one of them seemed animated and anxious to talk. Sato finally reported the conversation. He said that it embarrassed them to have us there. We were the only women customers they had ever served. They all lived at home, as Sato had said, and did not, of course, have dates with their customers, since the police would not permit it. All but one expected to marry the husband chosen by their families. That one, who wore a black-satin evening dress, said that she did not wish to marry unless she could have a wealthy husband—a salaried man, who could buy her pretty clothes. She would prefer, she said, to be a second wife of such a man, to being the first wife of a poor man.

"Heavens!" said Dee. "Dangerous thoughts!"

"Exactly." Sato nodded with an expression that looked, I thought, ironic. "When our nationalists try to close down such places as this, because they insist that they are a threat to our civilization, they are not as absurd as they seem."

At this moment a Japanese man came in. He was wearing a kimono and a felt hat, and carried a small fan. He sat down in a booth, and at once three of our little hostesses deserted us and clustered around him, giggling and chattering. Looking at the group, I thought of the *modan* restaurants we had seen in the afternoon, and remembered Sato's remark that we were the only women these hostesses had ever served, and realized we had been the only women everywhere we had gone. I said to Sato: "Don't Japanese men take their girl friends to *modan* restaurants and cafés?"

Sato grinned at me amiably. "Japanese men don't have girl friends," he said. He went on to say that Japanese social life is completely different from American. There are no casual contacts between young men and women before marriage. Husbands and

wives are chosen by the families, and meet only a few times before marriage, very formally in the presence of family and go-between. A Japanese man does not expect entertainment or companionship from his wife, or from any woman not a professional entertainer. When he wants feminine society, he goes to a tea-house and sends for a geisha, who is, of course, a professional actress—trained from childhood to sing and play musical instruments, and converse politely, more or less like dialogue for a play. The *modan* sort of entertainment, represented by the restaurants we had visited in the afternoon, and this bar, were not Japanese; they were foreign. There were actually only a handful of such places. The hostesses represented an entirely new class in Japanese society—respectable, untrained women, who were not professional entertainers, who would work in such bars for a short time and then marry. They were considered a dangerous revolutionary class and the police kept a very strict supervision over them, afraid lest their informal relations with strange men should give them un-Japanese ideas—such as the desire to choose their own husbands.

As Sato paused for a sip of *biru*, I stared around, admiring the incredibly expert copies of well-known paintings by Matisse and Picasso which decorated the walls—five-finger exercises for Japanese artists learning to use the Western media of oil paint on canvas. I admired, too, the large American iron stove, complete with foot-rests and iron curlicues, but without a stove-pipe, that stood in a prominent position near us. Noticing my glance, Dee explained that this bar represented Japanese-America, and the iron stove had been imported to make the scene authentic.

Looking at the stove, at our little marionettes—who were dangerous women—at the bartender who would mix me a “Monkey Gland” cocktail, I suddenly felt again the utter confusion I had felt on my first afternoon. Wherever Westernization was combined with anything Japanese, the result seemed to be a kind of no-man’s-land of disorder, incongruity and absurdity. I thought of Nobu now with a kind of understanding of his irritability, and imitating his manner as well as I could, looked at Dee and said: “This is not the real Japan.”

Dee laughed, “Of course not,” she said. “This is *modan* Japan.”

Mr. Sato nodded in agreement. "Definitely," he said. "This is Japan A. P."

"Japan A.P.?" I asked.

"*Sodesu*," said Mr. Sato. "Japan After Perry. You Westerners date your civilization Before and After Christ, but we Japanese date ours Before and After Perry." His tone was ironic. "If you do not like our *modan* Japan," he said, "you have only yourselves to blame, since it was after all an American who started the whole business."

He was referring, of course, to the fact that the American Commodore Perry had come to Japan in the 1850's seeking to establish trade relations. Before this, for almost two and a half centuries, Japan, by order of her government, had been cut off from the world, living in isolation, having neither diplomatic nor commercial relations abroad. The coming of Perry resulted in the "Opening of the Door" of Japan; Western science, machines, ideas, institutions and customs came pouring in, with the result that there developed in Japan a new civilization entirely different from the one that had existed Before Perry. I had known this, of course. What bothered me was that, actually, there seemed to be very little genuine Westernization. I had supposed, from the numerous accounts I had read of modern life in Tokyo, that it was a city very much like any other capital. Now I was here, however, it seemed to me that most of life was quite removed from Westernization, and that the Westernized things were not genuinely assimilated, but stuck up like a sore thumb, to announce that they were foreign.

I remarked this aloud, commenting that Tokyo was much less modernized than I had expected, and adding that even in the heart of the city, I had seen little that suggested the Great-Power Japan that I had heard so much about.

Sato grinned amiably. Unlike Nobu, he seemed quite willing to discuss his country. "My country," he said, "is confusing to the foreigner, especially to the American or Englishman, because you expect to find a Westernized, modern nation, not unlike America and England. This is because your newspapers are interested chiefly in Japan as a competitor, either in commerce or imperialism, and therefore print only statistics of textile exports, or accounts of our



army and navy, until these things loom so large that they seem to be the entire country.

"Then, too," he went on, "generally the correspondents for foreign papers stay as closely as possible to *modan* Japan, live in hotels run for foreigners, or in diplomatic compounds, and associate only with official or semi-official Japanese whose job it is to make them think that Japan is a modernized, great power. Their stories reflect only a small, special, really foreign world—rather than the actual Japan."

"And what," I said, "is the actual Japan?"

"The actual Japan," Sato answered, "is, of course, the complex of our own Before-Perry civilization, plus our After-Perry civilization, plus all the problems and tensions that have arisen in our attempt to be both Japanese and Western at once. You will find, however, I think, that our own civilization is still much more important to us than our modern civilization."

"The two don't seem to mix very well, do they?" I commented.

"That's right," Sato said. "They don't mix at all. We'll have to exclude Western civilization or give up our own."

"Yours is very picturesque," I said.

"Yes. But not streamlined enough for this age. Our kimonos are graceful, but they trip us when we run." He emptied his glass. "It is, of course, *modan* Japan that is most dangerous to us. That is, the Japan that takes over Western customs and ideas. We have been able to use your industrial techniques and the forms of your institutions, but we cannot use your customs of day-by-day life. We cannot afford them, and they make us uncomfortable, physically and psychologically." He glanced at our hostesses and then gestured toward us, grinning broadly. "Here are you two women visiting this place with a man. Unheard-of behaviour! And suppose these young women begin to ask questions about you—suppose they learn that you are respectable foreign women who are permitted to go about freely as you choose. Do you think it might not upset their present contentment?"

"Well, would it?" I asked.

He shrugged. "At least, our nationalists think it would."

We were interrupted by the bartender who came over to bow

apologetically and present the check. It was eleven-thirty, and he must close the bar.

"Police regulations," Sato explained as we prepared to leave. "The town closes up tight at eleven-thirty."

Our hostesses escorted us to the door, and bowed us away with many courteous giggles and cries of "Hello" and "Okai." We walked to the Ginza where Dee said we might find a taxi to take us home. She explained, as we went, that I had now seen almost the extent of foreign-style night life in Tokyo. There were, she said, one or two dance halls where Western-style dancing was permitted; and there were, of course, movies. The only Western-style theatre was a little group of intellectuals who occasionally put on a piece by Shaw or Gorki; and a troupe of girl actresses who put on strange versions of American revues and Italian operas. Everything was closed by eleven-thirty.

"So, you see," Sato said, laughing, as he put us into a taxi, "our *modan* Japan is not so very modern after all."

4

Other visits to *modan* Tokyo only confirmed the impressions of my first afternoon and evening. The centres of Westernization were scattered pin-pricks on the sprawling map of the city. The modernized, central business section, where the office building had central heating and plumbing, seemed almost smothered by the encroaching waves of small shops and winding alleys; and hardly anything lacked a Japanese touch to remind me that the West was an intruder. The non-Japanese population—a few thousand, at most—was lost in this city of seven million, so that, unless you lived at the Imperial Hotel or within a diplomatic compound closely associated with the foreign colony, you could wander about the city for months without ever seeing an American or European. Except on those occasions when I deliberately sought them out, I saw scarcely a half-dozen foreigners all the time I was in Japan.

The first time I ventured on an errand to the central part of the city alone, I felt quite courageous. Yet, as it turned out, getting around Tokyo in general was rather easy. In fact, the most

genuinely Westernized thing in Japan appeared to be the Tokyo transportation system. Bus and trolley services were excellent. There was a short stretch of immaculate subway; and an elevated electric train circled and bisected the city with a service so efficient that you seldom waited longer than five minutes for a train. The cars were usually crowded, so that it was often necessary to stand, but this was no surprise for a New Yorker. Everywhere people were unfailingly helpful in trying to understand where the "guest of Japan" wanted to go. An official at a station of the elevated would look at my ticket, seize my elbow with a white-gloved hand, and race me down the platform to the proper car; on the train, someone would always read my ticket, and nudge me at the proper station. The little bus conductorettes would fuss over me like attentive mother hens, and were, in fact, too solicitous, for, since you must buy a ticket to a definite stop, they were quite upset whenever I wished to alight at some intermediate point, which was usual, since if I did not know the name of the bus-stop I wanted, I would of course buy a ticket to the terminal. To find a private dwelling, however, was always difficult, and often the Japanese or foreigner with whom I had an engagement would suggest meeting me in some well-known, central place in the heart of the city.

For the next day or two after our meeting with Mr. Sato, we continued to visit various *modan* sights, since Dee felt that I should see the presumably familiar Japan first. It turned out, however, to be anything but familiar. We went to a performance of the Girls Opera Company, which represents Western-style theatre in Japan. It began at five in the afternoon; and at six there was an hour-interval while everyone had dinner in some one of a half-dozen different restaurants within the theatre. Our places were in the dress-circle, very comfortable Western-style seats; the young man sitting beside me, however, in a moment of abstraction during the performance, slipped off his clog and swung his bare foot up onto his lap. I noticed a theatre-party of three couples, elderly ladies and their husbands. The gentlemen sat together in the front row and their ladies sat together behind them. A geisha sat near us, attended by an ancient woman. She was resplendent in a theatrically elaborate kimono and *obi*, with whorls and mountains of lacquered hair, shot

through with combs and pins and small round paper fans on splinters of bamboo. During the performance, she put on spectacles with heavy, dark tortoise-shell rims which made an effect so incongruous with her costume and style it was as disturbing as some surrealist nightmare. The young women actresses in the company were considered "*modan* women." They were *modan*, however, only because they were actresses. In the classic Japanese theatre, women were not permitted to play roles, and the female parts were played by men. For women to appear on the stage was a revolutionary social change. To guard them against "dangerous thoughts" these *modan* actresses were required to live in dormitories, and were not allowed to have dates with gentlemen admirers.

This same situation was the rule among the movie actresses also. We visited a lot and saw them shooting a *modan*-style movie; we learned, however, that the majority of the actresses lived together in a dormitory, and that the lives of all of them were supervised carefully by a "moral-discipline" department.

The most important lesson I learned during these first days was that I could never assume that an English word, as used by a Japanese, had the meaning it would have in America. To know what a Japanese meant by any English word, it was necessary to discover what it meant from the Japanese point of view. The word *modan* was a conspicuous example of this. They might talk of *modan* this and that, but the word did not mean "modern," it meant simply anything at all that was not 100-per cent *shukan*. It was only by remembering this that I could keep any perspective about Japan.

Life soon settled down into a routine that was, however, far from monotonous. Dee spent a few hours each day at her office, leaving Akika and me to keep house and explore the city. Friends came to pay their respects to the American, and to offer and accept entertainment. I had letters of introduction, some of which I sent out now, with interesting results. I read newspapers, magazines, and books written in English and French by Japanese. Dee and I attended lectures and exhibitions of Flower Arrangement and Dancing offered freely to the interested foreigner by numerous "Culture" societies organized by the government and Big Business.

We went to see performances of the classic theatre and Japanese movies. We dined all over the city in innumerable little restaurants and shops, both Japanese-style and Japanese-modan. We attended a Tea Ceremony, escorted by Nobu, and formally viewed the lotus in Uneo Park. We *texi'd* continuously in all sections of the city, taking part in innumerable *ennichi* and *o-matsuri*, browsing in bookshops, viewing the scarlet-bottomed baboons in the zoo, the art exhibitions in the museums, and the magic spring in the basement of one of the largest *depato*, visiting both slums and the best residential districts—everywhere increasingly fascinated and astonished.

The more we wandered about the city, the more surprising it seemed as the capital of an aggressive, empire-building, modern nation. One could not compare it at all with any of the other world capitals—cities like London, New York, Paris, Berlin or Rome. These cities have in common the qualities of space, magnificence, extravagance—the expression, in architectural terms, of expansive, far-flung aspirations and actual conquests. Tokyo was different in kind. Nowhere was there any visible sign of wealth or power. The largest buildings were dignified rather than impressive; there were no skyscrapers, the country itself forbade them because of the ever-present danger of earthquakes. Many of the government buildings were ramshackle, and in their shabby, wooden corridors kettles of water for tea boiled over charcoal braziers. The temples and shrines were places of delight, but you could not compare them with the great cathedrals and palaces of Europe—their charm was the beauty of the natural surroundings and the art with which the structures had been harmonized with the setting.

National shrines and monuments commemorating historical events were everywhere, yet they did not correspond with similar monuments in Western nations. Only rarely did they commemorate some *actual* person or understandable event. There were shrines to foxes, to deified horses, ancient trees, deified statesmen whose lives were invariably filled with supernatural occurrences, and to deified Emperors. The trivial and the important were equally honoured; and if the Emperor Meiji was remembered with a shrine, so also was the cherry tree in which a twelfth-century warrior hung his staff. History was everywhere, yet there was no convincing

evidence of the centuries piled on centuries that underlie Japanese civilization. The monuments, being wood, looked impermanent and insubstantial, as the historic events commemorated seemed implausible and fantastic.

The charm of Tokyo was subtle. It was the charm of the miniature; of colour and slow motion; of astonishing contrasts. If there were *modan* bars, where the *mobo* (modern boy) could munch a *hamu* sandwich, there were also temples where worshippers could stand under an ice-cold waterfall in the ritual of purification. The music of the modern world was apparent in the clang of metal striking metal, in radio loudspeakers shrilling jazz or bawling admonitions to patriotism, in bicycle bells and taxi horns. These sounds were there, but they did not dominate. Beneath them, penetrating and insidious, were the shrilling of the insects, the thin, melancholy flute, the tomtom beat of the small wooden drums.

## IV

### JAPAN—MODAN AND IMMEMORIAL

"There is an animal called Ushi-uma on the Tanagashima Island, Kagoshima prefecture. The island is famous because Western guns were first brought to the island and they were called Tanagashima during the Tokugawa days. But Ushi-uma is also making the island very famous, as it is a species of animal that is not found anywhere else. Although it is called Ushi-uma (cattle-horse) it is not a cross breed of cattle and horse. Despite its misleading name, it is a horse, but its features resemble much those of cattle. Thus it may be called a kind of horse.

"The outstanding feature of Ushi-uma which makes it look so unlike a horse is that it has no mane. Then what makes it look so funny and strange is that its tail is utterly different from the ordinary horse tail. The tail is more like that of a cattle, not having the long hairs.

"One seeing the animal for the first time will be unable to say whether it is a horse or a cattle, but scientists say that it is a horse, with only unusual features. Even scientists are unable to explain how and why this strange specie of horse has appeared on the Tanagashima and nowhere else. Because of their uniqueness, those Ushi-uma are now being preserved and protected by the Government.

"The Tanagashima which was formerly famous for guns it introduced to Japan, is thus now famous for a unique kind of horse that does not look like a horse but more like a cattle."—News story in *The Japan Times*.

DEE subscribed to a daily newspaper, *The Japan Times and Mail*, a paper published in English, but written and edited by Japanese,

and known to represent one segment of official Japan. Its pages were a daily cross-section of Japanese interests, and reading it at breakfast was the perfect beginning for a Japanese day. Matters of the greatest moment were cheek-by-jowl with delightful animal stories and announcements of festivals where beans were thrown at the worshippers from the steps of a temple to frighten away the devils and cure acid indigestion. The Japanese mind seemed to turn with the greatest of ease from such realities as the arrival of a British commission to investigate the textile industry, or the activities of the Army in Asia, to fantasy and mythology. "Lotus-Popping Begins Tomorrow," a headline proclaimed, and the little article urged everyone, as a patriotic duty, to arise at dawn and troop to the parks to listen "to the gentle pop of the opening lotus." An editorial called attention to the great increases in traffic accidents. Near-by was the announcement of a festival in honour of a ninth-century statesman who had been deified as Patron Saint of Learning, and who was able to protect the faithful from being struck by lightning.

In settling down in a foreign country, it is necessary to make certain physical and psychological adjustments. On my former travels, I had never had any difficulty about either, and had not expected to find my experience in Japan an exception. Nor was it entirely so, for the physical adjustment I made rather easily. The problem of baths and beds and shoes—which at first had seemed a hurdle—was already solved as soon as I accepted the fact that Tokyo was not a modern city, and that every detail of Japanese custom was special to Japan. I soon found myself automatically removing my shoes to enter even very Western-looking places, as I was soon bowing as rhythmically and unthinkingly and perpetually as any Japanese. In time the carpenter came, and despite many pauses for a spot of "meditative-sitting," he managed at last to saw through my closet shelf and give me a pole to hang my clothes on. Our occasional bath was thrice welcome, not only because it always seemed a special treat, but because squatting in the wooden vat in water close to boiling was an experience that did, actually, conduce to that pleasant frame of mind that the Japanese call "emptiness," and the weak-headed Westerner associates with the joys of mild insobriety. I became

reconciled to the constant rain and smothering humidity. I discovered a position in which I could be not too uncomfortable sitting on the mats. In short, my physical adjustment was soon accomplished. The psychological adjustment, however, was another matter.

Living in Peking, ten years before, I had fallen into the habit of saying, what everybody there said, that Japan was merely inferior China. This referred, of course, to the fact that the Before-Perry Japanese had taken so much of their civilization from China, as the After-Perry Japanese had borrowed from Europe and America. What they had borrowed, however, in both periods was largely certain institutions, certain techniques for organizing their society or performing labour. As they had taken Confucianism from China in their Before-Perry period, so in their modern, they took the Western institution of compulsory education and set up their system of schools and colleges following Western models; as they had taken silk and tea from the Chinese, so they took steam-engines, dynamos and power-looms from the West. These were basic elements in their civilization, yet they did not make Japan in the least like China or America. And it was not until I put both China and America out of my mind that I began to make an adjustment to Japan, for the superficial resemblances, the surface familiarities, only made the predominating Japanese civilization the more confusing.

There were, of course, certain differences that you could put your finger on and accept as merely a difference in custom. I could accept, for instance, the fact that Japanese and American social relations were organized very differently, and that the Japanese wife was not a hostess, and did not accompany her husband on his outings except on some special occasion decreed by *shukan* as a "family" affair. I could accept the fact that there was little informal visiting between families, and that almost all recreation was formal and communal—special festivals of one sort or another. Once one understood these conventions, it was as easy to adjust to them as to the physical fact of taking off one's shoes. My psychological discomfort was caused by something more serious than a mere divergence in custom; something more serious even than the confusion caused by the incongruous mixture of Western and Japanese. It was caused by what



appeared to be a simple fact—that the Japanese individually and collectively were able, to a very great extent, to live in an imaginary world remote from practical reality.

Most of Dee's friends were *modan* Japanese; that is, they—at least, the men—usually wore Western clothes when they visited us, and spoke some English. Most of them were of the professional and business classes, the same sort of people we would have known at home. Yet, their interests and points of view were as dissimilar from ours as possible, and the things we did together, even when they were such familiar things as dining or viewing fireworks, were basically unlike similar things in America. They were all courteous, almost embarrassingly generous, anxious that these "guests of Japan"—a phrase I often heard—should like their country, and yet I was often troubled by a feeling that they were all living in some world of their own from which I was excluded. I do not mean by this that we were excluded from their actual world—we were admitted freely to their homes, we were taken to special family celebrations, we were escorted to all kinds of traditional Japanese social and religious festivities. The world that excluded us was a world of the imagination, a world of values entirely different from those of an American—values which they found as difficult to explain as I, at first, to understand; and the fact that they so often looked so American only made their preoccupations seem the more mysterious.

Moreover, it was not only Dee's friends of whom this was true. It seemed equally true of all classes. Reading the newspapers and magazines, attending lectures given by Japanese University professors, wandering about the city, I was constantly startled to discover that if the Japanese lived in a world of reality, they seemed also to live in a world of the imagination—a world that made no distinction between fact and fantasy, between history and mythology, between actual persons and events and imaginary persons and events—or, for the matter, between actual things and imaginary things.

2

One of the first to entertain us was Nobu, who invited us to view the "real Japan" by dining with him at his favourite restaurant.

By "real Japan," he meant un-Westernized Japan, and he called for us looking like a theatrical poster—wearing a kimono of oyster-white pebble crepe, with a black sash and fan, and white clogs with a black thong on his bare feet.

We went to the restaurant in a taxi (though for Nobu, I thought, a lacquered sedan chair would have been more suitable) and, as we went, Nobu talked of his country's culture, commenting on the difference between it and America.

"We Japanese," he said, "are not materialists like you Westerners. We value things, not for their monetary worth, but for their historical and traditional associations, for their overtones and symbolism."

Entirely at ease this evening, feeling perhaps that Dee had warned me not to press him for political opinions, or perhaps because he was genuinely pleased to be showing me his "real Japan," he continued to talk easily, telling me that in his country dining was an art.

"We Japanese," he said, "are not interested in food. What is important to us is the arrangement of the bowls on the trays, the colour and texture of food and garnish, the etiquette with which it is served."

He went on to say that most dishes served at formal dinners were traditional, and that, during the thousands of years of Japanese history, there had grown up around each dish a host of memories of other occasions on which it had been served, at some Imperial banquet, for instance, or some gathering of poets or sages, where there had been poems written and moral maxims invented, inspired by the dishes. When eating a certain dish, therefore, one thought of all this, and could by this means enjoy the society of the ancient wise ones.

The restaurant was an enchanting place, a rambling one-storey structure set in a formal garden, that seemed spacious (although it was actually tiny), because of the art with which a path of rough stones curved among the dwarfed pines, the stone lanterns, and small ponds of glittering gold-fish. The building was fragile and ghostly in the dusk, the paper walls luminous from the glow of lights within; and on one wall was silhouetted the shadow of a figure with ex-

travagantly piled hair, holding a *samisen*. There was the tinkle of the *samisen* and the chirping of crickets that were hanging in tiny bamboo cages in the garden. The whole effect was stylized and artificial, finished and decorative as though it had been consciously designed for a stage set.

Nobu announced our presence with a cry, and at once the sliding panels of the entrance were pushed back to disclose a corps of little maids in light, colourful kimonos, kneeling on the polished floor, bowing until their foreheads almost touched, murmuring involved phrases of formal welcome. Madame, the proprietress, appeared among them, an elderly woman in deep purple and brown kimono, with piles of improbable hair. Nobu was known, and there was a great to-do of welcome. The little maids took our shoes away from us, gave us flannel, heelless slippers and, fluttering and cooing, led us down a corridor—a polished tunnel walled with luminous paper—that turned and twisted, exposing through an occasionally open wall, brief glimpses of interior courtyards, or small, gleaming rooms.

The maids paused at last and we all kicked off our slippers. They knelt gravely in the corridor while one of them opened a sliding panel. Nobu called my attention to this door-opening. He said that the correct way to open and close doors had been formulated in the fourteenth century, and that all Japanese women were taught how to do it. First, the hands resting before the kneeling figure on the mats; then, since the door opened to the left, the right hand pushing the door an exact fraction of the required distance; then, the right hand returning to the mats while the left hand completed the movement. Nobu explained that every detail of housekeeping and social relations had been worked out centuries before by the great masters of court etiquette, and that these details were still an essential part of the education of every Japanese woman. Nobu gave me this explanation with dignity. It obviously did not seem odd to him that modern people should behave in accordance to rules laid down in the fourteenth century.

Our small room was a bland expanse of matting—silky as milkweed fluff. In one corner was an alcove decorated with a picture scroll and a flat, shallow dish with one gigantic rose-coloured lotus and a spray of reeds. One wall was open and led to a shallow

veranda disclosing a scrap of garden, and—Nobu waved an arm dramatically as though he had personally arranged it—a full moon, straw-coloured like the mats, bland and composed against a pale night sky.

With a great waving of sleeves, the maids brought cushions, pale tea, small handleless cups, and crunchy, golden crackers. Nobu and Madame exchanged civilities, giving the effect, I thought, of carefully rehearsed dialogue. We were seated on the mats. A final flutter and coo and bow, and Madame and the maids had gone—shutting the door behind them. It was exactly as though the curtain had fallen on the prologue to the first act of a ballet.

Dinner was theatre, too. Three of the corps de ballet brought us little trays on squat legs, which they placed before us in an exact pattern, shifting them and us until we were all in exact relation to each other—part of a triangular design. At last a little maid knelt beside and slightly behind each of us. Ceremoniously they lifted the small bottles from their bamboo containers and filled our thimble-sized cups with warm *sake*. There was silence while we enjoyed the spectacle—lacquer trays arranged with covered bowls and porcelain dishes, each one in precisely its correct and traditional place. There were splotches of brilliant colour, cerise and green; there was a flash of green-white ice. Then Dee and Nobu bowed to each other, murmuring traditional phrases. Simultaneously the maids removed the lacquer covers of the bowls. The curtain had risen. The drama of dinner would begin.

I turned my attention to the tray. What I had at first supposed to be ice was actually corrugated glass to simulate ice. On it reposed paper-thin strips of raw fish, both white and red, arranged in a formal pattern, and garnished with a spray of vivid green seaweed. Nobu said that raw fish must always have some garnish of seaweed or transparent noodles, or else it was merely a dish for the vulgar. Besides the fish, there was a volcano-shaped mound of grated white radish—one poured soybean sauce over this, Nobu demonstrated—to make a dressing for the fish. There was also a bowl of clear soup, decorated with colourful tidbits of beancurd and seaweed.

There was no conversation. Nobu delicately wielded his chop-

sticks in his inordinately long fingers, gazing at the delicacies with a sort of brooding intensity that suggested he was dining—in his imagination—with some fourteenth-century Emperor. My attempts at talk fell flat. I soon saw that it was not *shukan* to confuse the poetry of dining with the prose of conversation. There were many courses. The little maids at intervals removed our empty dishes and brought us new ones, all of them attractively decorated with some different garnish—red ginger, a scrap of brown shiny fish that looked as though it had been lacquered, or something not edible at all like a bit of bamboo leaf. Except for the soup and the raw fish of the first course, however, all the dishes were beancurd. They were all prepared in some different way, fried or pickled, warm or cool—and they were all decorated with some special garnish—still, they were beancurd. That is, they were all beancurd to me. To Nobu each one was an esthetic or moral experience, as he finally explained, telling me that each dish had a different name, a poetic or fanciful name, suggesting some line of poetry, some admonition of an ancient wise man, or describing some landscape. There was, for instance, a dish called *Sasa no yuki ankake tofu*, that could be translated, “the snow softly covers the pale bamboo.” Nobu said that if, as one tasted the dish, one thought of the landscape described by its name, the pleasure was enormously enhanced. I ate my next course thoughtfully, not, I am afraid, concentrating on the dish before me, but instead planning a menu for a dinner party to be given on my return to New York. It should consist only of potatoes. I would call the boiled potatoes, “Niagara Falls at dawn;” the mashed potatoes, “A penny saved is a penny earned;” and the fried potatoes, “Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean.” . . . I turned off these thoughts with a feeling of guilt, for Nobu was taking all this quite seriously.

There came at last the moment when we had drunk all the *sake*, and eaten everything edible. There was, however, an empty bowl on the tray, and since I was still hungry, I was hoping for some surprise, possibly a sweet, and the empty bowl suggested that I was not to be disappointed. Nor was I, for at this moment a little maid brought in a gigantic round covered lacquered box, which she carried on a tray with the manner of one bearing the crown jewels. Nobu

smiled broadly and permitted himself a "Sa!" of satisfaction. Consumed with curiosity and anticipation, it was with the greatest difficulty that I restrained my impatience until the little maid, after many genuflections and sleeve-wavings, and an exchange of ritualistic dialogue with Nobu, removed the cover. The box was full of steaming rice. The maid ceremoniously presented a tray to Nobu who took up his empty bowl between the palms of his two hands and placed it on the tray. There was an exchange of bows, accompanied, I supposed, by poetic thoughts. The same ritual was followed with Dee and me. The rice served, ceremony vanished for a time, as Nobu held his bowl close to his lips and shovelled with dexterous chopsticks. He ate several bowlfuls, and at the conclusion of dinner, tea was served in the rice bowls, and the occasional floating kernels of rice (suggesting perhaps a fleet of butterfly boats in the Inland Sea) seemed to add to Nobu's enjoyment of the drink.

Dinner over, the little maids gathered up the trays, and kneeling, bowing, and waving sleeves, withdrew as they had come, carefully closing the door behind them.

### 3

We were next invited to dine in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kiyooka. Koki Kiyooka was the brother of Dee's friend, Chiyo; he wore Western clothes, spoke English well, and, a gentleman of means, was also a student and writer. Tama, his wife, spoke no English, wore kimono, and had had a conventional upbringing. Their home was in a suburb a short distance from Tokyo. It was a two-storey, stucco, *modan*-style house, set in a garden of grass—an English garden, Mr. Kiyooka described it to us—with, however, a Japanese touch in the tall grasses at the end of it. In one corner under a stunted maple tree was a small pool where fan-tailed goldfish swam. Dee and I, upon arrival, were received in a Western-style room with a hardwood floor covered with rugs and Western furniture. Nevertheless, we had left our shoes at the outer door. Our dinner was served on a Western-style table, yet we ate with chopsticks, and the dishes were all Japanese—raw egg and seaweed was one of them. Since this was a Western-style dinner, in our

honour, the service was simple, and there was no mention of fanciful names for the dishes. Nevertheless, the emphasis of the evening was fantasy.

Getting ready for this party, Dee consulted lengthily with Akiko: what gifts would be suitable for us to present on this occasion? It was *shukan*, Dee explained to me, to take one's hostess a gift if one dined in her home, though if you dined at a restaurant, it was not necessary. The gift was usually of small monetary value, but must be suitable for the occasion, or you would prove yourself without breeding. Akiko was in some doubt about this occasion until Dee happened to mention the pool in our hostess' garden. That decided it. There was, by chance, a full moon. Our hostess would naturally wish to show us the rays of the moon reflected in her pool. Therefore, for Dee, Akiko chose a kind of beanjelly candy called "*Mizu-no-tsuki*" or "Moon-on-the-Water," and for me, a soft beanjelly called "*Mizu-yokan*" or water jelly, a sort of sweet especially suitable for the early summer, and suggesting, too, the little pond. Our gifts were beautifully wrapped by the shop where Akiko bought them for us—with coloured cords in marvellously intricate knots, and as a final touch, Akiko thrust through the cord of Dee's package one slender reed, as a last symbol of the pool.

The gifts were well received, and we were taken out to bow to *Tsuki Sama*, the Goddess Moon—lovely on the little pond. All this I liked, yet I had expected also that with Mr. Kiyooka—an educated man and a writer—there might be some discussion of Japan, some analysis, perhaps, of the reasons for certain customs, with, possibly, comparisons with America. Instead, however, there was for some time merely the polite conventional exchange of appreciation for the gifts, of inquiries about health and family, followed by the conventional questions to me, "What have you seen in Japan? What do you think of Japan? What does America think of Japan?"—so obviously expecting only conventional answers, that all I could do was to nod and smile like a veritable Japanese. When, following dinner, Dee attempted to draw Mr. Kiyooka into more serious talk, he assumed precisely the attitude that Nobu had assumed. "No foreigner can understand Japanese culture," he said, more bored apparently than arrogant. "The foreigner," he went on, "is interested in facts,

whereas we know that facts are of no importance. What is important, is intuition."

He was writing, he said, a book in the French language to expound this thesis.

On the way home, thinking about the evening, I commented to Dee on what a very Japanese evening it had been. Dee, thereupon, turned to me with some astonishment. It had been a very *modan* party, she said. I finally discovered why. It was *modan* because the Kiyookas had a *modan*-style house, because we dined from a table, sitting on chairs; and especially, it was *modan* because we had been entertained by both Tama San and her husband together, sitting at the same table in their home. This sort of mixed entertainment, Dee assured me, was not the custom in Japan, and by giving us this rare sort of dinner party, Mr. Kiyooka was being, not only cosmopolitan, but positively radical.

4

Our next entertainment served to confirm the rarity of the Kiyookas' husband-and-wife dinner party. It served also to assure me that ritual etiquette and make-believe were not merely esoteric escapist entertainment for the well-to-do. The party was arranged by Mr. Nikko, an exporter who had travelled in Europe and England, and who had known in London a ceramic artist interested in Japanese pottery making, and who happened also to be a friend of Dee. It was through this friend that Dee had met Mr. Nikko. He was a stocky, good-humoured gentleman, who spoke excellent English and wore Western clothes. He arrived at the house one afternoon at 4.30 in some excitement. He had come, he said, to greet the American and take us to view a famous historical annual event, called "The Opening of the Sumida." This annual festival announced the coming of summer. The special feature was an exhibition of fireworks held on the banks of the Sumida—the river that coils through Tokyo.

"You must come with me at once," he said urgently, explaining that for this event it was always difficult to get places.

To get places, involved dinner. The festival itself was not until



the following Saturday, but since the bleacher seats (which had been erected for the occasion along the river) were already sold out, we must get our places in one of the numerous river-restaurants. We dined, therefore, on a barge moored to the bank of the river. In between courses Mr. Nikko conducted an involved formal conversation with our waitress who knelt on the mats beside him, during which it was arranged that we might have seats for the festival on the roof of the restaurant. Though this seemed to me a somewhat indirect attack on the problem of getting tickets for a fireworks exhibition, there was no question but that to both Mr. Nikko and the waitress the make-believe and play-acting were an important part of the entertainment.

When we said good night to Mr. Nikko, promising to be at the restaurant at three on Saturday, Dee sent a greeting to Mrs. Nikko. It surprised and rather disconcerted me to learn that Mr. Nikko was married, for I felt we had been rude to go off and enjoy ourselves without his wife. Akiko, however, when I commented to her about it, assured me Mrs. Nikko would not have expected to accompany her husband on this occasion. The wife, she said, accompanied the husband only on certain specific occasions which were all carefully defined by custom; and making arrangements for the festival was, of course, a man's job, even though the arrangements meant a dinner party and even though this particular festival was one of the family holidays. Since, however, it was a "family" occasion, Akiko was included in our invitation, although she had not been included in the dinner party.

When we arrived at the restaurant on Saturday, we found there waiting for us, both Mr. and Mrs. Nikko and a man friend. I hoped, of course, to talk to Mrs. Nikko, a dignified middle-aged woman. She, however, made it clear at once that conversation was not expected. She spoke no English, and I could understand her unwillingness to cope with my attempts at Japanese, but even to Dee's fluency she responded only by bows and courtesy smiles. Our places were in a small box, crowded beside a dozen others on the roof of the restaurant. It was a "foreign-style" box, which meant that we had two benches in addition to a scrap of matting in front. Mr. Nikko arranged us—Dee and Akiko and I on the back bench;

Mr. Nikko and his friend in front of us (this was Japanese custom); Mrs. Nikko chose the scrap of matting, where she knelt, arranged the folds of her brown and white silk kimono (the colours sombre as suitable to her age and dignity) and sat throughout the afternoon and evening, neither speaking nor moving, except when we had refreshments—sandwiches which we had brought, and tea, beer, cold rice and colourful bits of fish and fungus put up in small boxes which Mr. Nikko bought for us.

The festival itself began at three in the afternoon and lasted till ten. From three o'clock on, the fireworks were set off at regular intervals: first, twenty minutes; then, ten; and finally, with only a minute or two between the explosions. From three till seven, of course, the roman candles and rockets were visible only as a puff of smoke. This, however, did not disconcert our friends and neighbours, who had purchased, for a few sen, a very thick "programme of events" in which every rocket, every roman candle, every sparkler, was named with a poetic name and described with a fanciful fairy-tale. The Japanese could read the descriptions, listen to the boom, see the puff of smoke, and in their imagination, picture a burst of fireworks more splendid than any ever seen by mortal eye.

This festival was not an entertainment for the well-to-do upper classes. It was a "popular" show, and there were hundreds of thousands of people crowded on barges in the river, filling the extensive bleachers, swarming in the streets along the shore, and Mr. Nikko made it clear that no Japanese would find anything odd in the idea of spending four hours viewing invisible fireworks.

## 5

Dee's most delightful friend was Mr. Muro. He was a teacher of English in a Tokyo higher school (the grades above high school and just before the University), Dee explained, in introducing us, leaving her place at the breakfast table to greet him—for he had dropped in at seven in the morning. He accepted a chair at the table, beaming at us like a delightful and animated kewpie—bulging pink cheeks and narrow eyes rayed with innumerable laughing wrinkles. "So glad," he said. "I often desire to know what foreigner

eat for medicine." He was interested in the *tosuto*, which he had never seen before, since it is not a Japanese food, and ate and drank with gusto—making polite, sucking noises, wrinkling his eyes in an occasional smile at us.

Breakfast over, he pushed back his chair, pulled his shoeless feet up under him on the seat, and told Dee that he had come into town from his suburban home especially to tell her a story. He began to talk—rocking slightly back and forth on his chair, reminding me of the Japanese god, Daruma, whose small images, weighted at the bottom, sway back and forth, yet always recover—telling about someone called Kato Kiyo Masa who had gone to hunt tigers in Korea. I supposed that this Kato was a friend of Mr. Muro, and probably an acquaintance, at least, of Dee. It was not easy to follow the story, because Mr. Muro talked much faster than I would have thought possible, ignored entirely all articles and tenses, and whenever he could not immediately think of the word he wanted, substituted the word "medicine." Trying to decide what "medicine" meant in any particular context kept me perpetually three sentences behind the thread of his discourse.

The story over, I said to Dee, "Your friend has gone to Korea?"

She looked absolutely blank. "My friend!" she said.

"Yes," I answered. "This Kato person Mr. Muro has been talking about."

Dee looked blanker than ever, and then suddenly began laughing. Mr. Muro joined her and they sat laughing and wiping their eyes, delighted by some joke which I did not understand. Finally, Dee took pity on me. Kato Kiyo Masa, she explained, was a sixteenth-century general who had gone to Korea during a time of unrest to attempt to encourage a native revolution against the Chinese rulers and so establish a Japanese foothold on the continent. Although he had been unsuccessful, he had been deified, and temples and shrines had been erected in his honour in various places around the country. It happened that our neighbourhood temple was dedicated to him. Mr. Muro knew this, so when this morning he had happened, suddenly, to remember this story about Kato's tiger-hunting, he had thought Dee would be interested and had come to tell it to her.

I was about to ask further questions when Mr. Muro, noticing my purse on a table nearby, asked me, eagerly, if I had any American money in it. He had, he said, never seen any and would like to. I opened my purse and brought out a ten-dollar bill. Mr. Muro studied it gravely. He was especially interested in the portrait of Alexander Hamilton, and asked me to tell him about this gentleman. I told him as well as I was able. He listened attentively, and when I had finished, brought out a Japanese ten-yen note which he handed me, saying that Japan and America were very much alike. The Japanese, he said, also honoured a great financier and statesman by representing his face on their ten-dollar note. He pointed to the portrait. It represented, he said, Kamatari Fujiwara, who in the seventh century, through his great ability at finance and organization, was able to be very useful to the Imperial Government, and had, in fact, become so useful that he and his family for generations after him exercised practically Imperial power through holding most of the high government offices. This Kamatari Fujiwara, Mr. Muro went on, was the connecting link between the Age of Gods and modern Japan. For he was the descendant of Amatsu-Koyane no-Mikoto, one of the attendant gods who accompanied the great grandson of the Sun Goddess when he came down to the newly created Islands of Japan from Heaven to found the Japanese Empire. He was also an ancestor of the illustrious Mitsui family who were so prominent today in the financial and industrial and government circles of modern Japan. Having told the story, Mr. Muro sat rocking back and forth, beaming with friendliness.

I looked at the seventh-century statesman, who, from the Japanese point of view, corresponded to Alexander Hamilton, and I feared I could never understand Japan. I had learned in China that the American is at a disadvantage in the Orient, because of the Oriental's casual habit of thinking in terms of centuries while the American is incorrigibly centred in the present. This, however, was something different—Mr. Muro had linked the most powerful financial family in the country, by way of a seventh-century ancestor, back to a mythological age, giving no suggestion that he considered the story to be merely an amusing legend. Here, he had said very calmly, was the connecting link between the Age of Gods and modern Japan.

The only comforting assurance of realism, I thought, returning the note to Mr. Muro, was the fact that this connecting link between "Immemorial Japan" and "*Modan* Japan" was a ten-yen note.

## 6

In the days that followed, I met and was entertained by other friends of Dee, while we, in turn, took them to dine in restaurants of their own choosing. I met Mr. Muro's charming wife and twelve-year-old son. I met also Dee's most exalted friend, Mrs. General Minamoto, who was a Lady-in-Waiting to a Princess of the Blood, and wife of a man who had been born into the now-vanished caste of warrior-samurai. We visited Mrs. Minamoto in her home, and often saw her son, Yoso, who was a student in the Imperial University, but I did not meet the Samurai until I had been many months in the country. There were others; and each new friend and each new entertainment seemed to confirm certain early impressions.

*Modan*, as I had learned, meant simply anything that deviated from Japanese custom. Nobu, whose preoccupations were Noh dancing, Dining as an Art, and Flower Arrangement, was a *modan* Japanese, because he spoke English, occasionally wore foreign clothes, and taught in a "progressive school." This school, as I finally learned, was an excellent example of what *modan* means in Japan. For the school was "progressive" and "modern" only because both boys and girls in their teens were permitted to study together in the same classroom. What they studied in their English classes was "Little Lord Fauntleroy," which Nobu told me seriously was "excellent moral instruction" for them. This did not seem very modern or progressive to an American, but it was practically radical in Japan. What they studied was not the point . . . the point was that co-education for young men and women was revolutionary.

The use of Western furniture in homes, and even the wearing of Western clothes seemed to a great extent to be a sort of affectation—an assertion that the individual was familiar with Western custom, and could afford expensive Western things. The well-to-do Japanese lady carried a foreign-style silk umbrella instead of a Japanese paper one, largely because it was *haikara* (smart, up-to-date) to do so.

The homes of even Dee's most *modan* friends were predominantly Japanese-style, and their one or two Western rooms seemed to be maintained only as a kind of snobbery, for as soon as our relations were easy, we were taken, immediately after our reception in the Western room, into a Japanese one where we could be comfortable on the mats. The foreign-style room was usually a monstrosity. Mrs. Minamoto's, for instance, contained great leather chairs, their backs covered with antimacassars of Irish crochet, mission chairs, wicker tables and an enormous Chinese divan inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Since this room had also the conventional alcove with scroll and flower arrangement, and since we must sit in it with shoeless feet, the disorder was complete. Western people, of course, make the same sort of errors in trying to adapt Oriental furnishings to their Western homes, and amuse visiting Chinese or Japanese by using a Chinese petticoat to cover a piano, or a Korean chamber-pot for an umbrella stand. Such incongruities, however, are more obvious in Japan because of the perfect sheen and order of the purely Japanese rooms.

Into our social life, the *modan* world intruded very little. Mr. Muro came often and said that he came to practise English conversation, yet actually this conversation consisted in his telling us involved and fantastic stories of improbable national heroes or gods; or the plots of the classic plays which were full of ghosts and goblins, magic foxes and badgers, and samurai who could change themselves into frogs or foxes with beguiling ease. Or he would bring his favourite puppet (a beautiful doll with long black hair, the size of a four-year-old child) and, holding her on his lap, would sit cross-legged on the mats and, manipulating the cords that moved her arms and legs, her fingers and even her eyelashes—would sing for us the plaintive falsetto arias of the puppet theatre. In such moments, Mr. Muro seemed far removed from a teacher of English, and introduced us to a world that was fascinating and theatrically satisfying.

Dee and I attended many sessions of the "Oriental Cultural Society," of which those devoted to music and dancing were marvelously interesting. The lecturer on the dance might have been invented to illustrate the conception, Oriental Philosopher. He was dressed in a heavy grey silk kimono, and over it wore a *hakama*, the full long pleated skirt which finished at the waist with an intri-

cate and formal knot. He held a small fan, and although his was everyday formal dress he was perfectly costumed to demonstrate his subject. On the platform beside him was a blackboard on which he drew groups of little rectangles and triangles that became, astonishingly, the figures of ladies. Upon one of these figures, he drew rapid lines across the throat, the waist, and the knees. In a woman's body, he explained, there were zones of sexual appeal. These were the curves that surrounded the "joints" of her body. Costumes were everywhere designed to conceal some of these joints. In India they were all concealed by the flowing veils and the enfolding robes. In modern, civilized society, the normal dress concealed but one joint and exposed two. Europe left the upper and middle exposed (by showing the throat and moulding the waist); Japan left the upper and lower exposed, concealed the middle under the huge *obi* which fills the hollow of the back and makes a straight line from throat to knees, and accentuating the upper joint by wearing the kimono low at the nape of the neck. One of the movements of the geisha dance, he explained, was the spreading of the knees to show the under-joint, while other poses required the puckering of the inturning toes to hold the knees together while the head drooped at an angle carefully adjusted to the other angles of the posed figure, and that accentuated the "joint" of the throat. The sleeves were the "needle of seismography," recording delicately the most subtle movements of arms or body. The dance employed the fan, the *tenugui* (a little decorative towel), the sleeve, as symbolic aids to representation, for although the dance abhorred the obvious, the significance of certain formal movements of the fan were understood and added symbolism to the pleasure of delicate movement.

With his fan, he illustrated a number of these poses: "I look high mountain; I look cherry blooms; I look enemy; I look butterflies flying; I look pool." The fan was describing arcs and poses, his sleeves were writhing, his body swooping and bending. He was no longer an elderly professor—he was the dance; the costume, the self-centred poise and assurance, the fan, accomplishing the miracle.

This theatrical formality and make-believe pervaded almost everything Japanese that was not Westernized. Like Nobu's entertainment, all formal dinners were slow-motion pantomimes, with little

variety in food, since everything an American takes for granted—meat, bread, coffee, milk, salads—was “foreign” to the Japanese . . . imported, expensive, and unknown to the average. The variety was in the names and garnishes and ritual of service. The Tea Ceremony, to which Nobu escorted us, was also a theatrical performance dominated by ritual and symbolism. So too were the exhibitions of Flower Arrangement. In all of these, every gesture of greeting, of using utensils, bowls, or flowers and branches, was traditional and memorized, carefully learned by years of practice. There were 30,000 teachers of Flower Arrangement in Tokyo alone (Akiko had studied for three years to perfect herself in the art), and what was important, even more than the visual effect, was the ceremonial of the act of arrangement, and the symbolism. The Japanese does not actually create an arrangement of flowers, he creates a symbolic tribute to nature, or composes a poetic conception to suggest delight or melancholy, meeting or parting. The emphasis is a literary one of symbolic meanings and a theatrical one of elaborate ceremonial.

I did not, of course, immediately understand this. The theatricalism of Nobu's dinner party, at the time, struck me as extreme. Although I thoroughly enjoyed the ritual and colour, the costumes of the little maids, the finish and perfection of service, nevertheless the make-believe of the fanciful names seemed play-acting carried to a point of implausibility. To make two dishes of beancurd sufficiently different to be satisfying as variety by merely changing the name and the garnish—this was carrying esotericism to an extreme limit. I had, therefore, fallen back on my first feeling about Nobu—that he was a rather precious young man, who was escaping from the real facts of political Japan into an elaborate and personal play-acting. Soon, however, I was forced to realize that with all our entertainment, a similar kind of unreality was the dominant tone. I remembered that in the *modan* bar, the cocktails, although they had had many fancy names, were all vermouth and brandy. Mr. Nikko's fireworks would have been entirely invisible for four hours had we not been able to visualize them from the elaborate descriptions in the programme. Everywhere the emphasis in social relations was on the ritual etiquette; the exchange of correct, symbolic gifts; the exchange of courtesy expressions; the correct



number of bows—the hands in exactly the correct position—these were the important things to our Japanese friends. The emphasis was on a world entirely theatrical and formal when not actually imaginary, and the whole made an effect of unreality that, to an American, was both fascinating and disturbing.

## 7

The effect of unreality, that was the dominant tone of our relations with Dee's friends, was not confined to these relations. It was an inescapable part of life in Tokyo, for you could scarcely leave the house without coming across some reference to the supernatural; and the newspapers and magazines constantly referred to mythological persons and events with the gossipy sort of interest usually reserved for one's friends and neighbours. To discover, however, just how seriously the Japanese believed this mythology was not easy.

Since Akiko and I spent so much time at home together, both of us studying—she English and I things Japanese—I had fallen into the habit of taking her various problems for clarification. At first, this was a troublesome task, not so much because of the language difficulty, which we managed very well with her English and our phrase books, but because of *shukan*. "How you think so many questions?" she asked one day, not with satiric intent, but in simple astonishment. The Japanese, she told me, does not ask questions; he does not answer them either, except indirectly, so that at first what I learned from Akiko had to be in terms of her reaction to the things we did together, or little comments and suggestions she made. Gradually, however, the formality between us wore down. We both lost, too, our self-consciousness, became willing to make mistakes for the other's correcting, so that it was not long before we were able to exchange real information about our two countries. There were, however, certain problems which I hesitated to bring up, and the most important of these was the Japanese attitude toward mythology, and so, of course, the attitude toward the Emperor.

When I arrived in Japan, I had been interested in the Japanese mythological legends that recount the divine origins of the sacred

Islands, and the divine birth of the Emperor, as I was interested in similar legends of other civilizations. I had, of course, been brought up on the Greek and Roman myths that are part of the background of Western culture, and having a literary bent of mind, had in college found social origins in general and Frazer's "Golden Bough" in particular, the most absorbing reading. In the Occident, however, and in America especially, the modern world has renounced mythology for science. Whenever there are references in newspapers or magazines to Apollo or Jupiter or Achilles, it is clearly recognized that the reference is to a fable, a fictitious narrative, an imaginary tale. In Tokyo, however, I found constant references to the characters of their mythology as though they were actual persons; and, in fact, soon discovered that the Japanese begin to date their history from the reign of Emperor Jimmu, who was, according to the Japanese, not only an actual man, but also a deity named "Kamu-Yamato-Iwarebiko-no-Mikoto." Obviously, from an American point of view, to say that a deity named "Kamu-Yamato-Iwarebiko-no-Mikoto," was the "first historically substantiated Emperor of Japan" was to confuse fact with fantasy, history with legend, imaginary objects with actual objects. Yet that is what the Japanese did.

I found this confusion first, when, en route to Japan, I read a book that Dee had sent me, called "Tales from the Kojiki." The Kojiki or "Records of Ancient Matters," is an account of the mythological origins and early history of Japan. I had for some time been familiar with the legends in the translation by Basil Hall Chamberlain, but I found the translation Dee sent, done by a Japanese, Mr. Y. Isobe, more interesting—not only because the slips in English lent a certain colour to the tales, but because the translator's comments were so revealing. For Mr. Isobe, after telling how the Sea Princess, Toyotama, became a "crocodile eight fathoms long" in order to give birth to a god who was called "Ugaya-Fukiaezu-no-Mikoto," went on to say that this god had four sons, one of whom became the "great and famous Jimmu Tenno, the first historically substantiated Emperor of Japan."

Reading this on the boat, I had been merely enchanted by the facility of this shift from the imaginary to the actual, and had thought no more about it. In Tokyo, however, I soon learned that

it was not only Mr. Isobe who was able to perform this mental legerdemain. It was everybody.

In the centre of Tokyo stands the Imperial Palace. It is a shrine, and whenever I passed by I would see Japanese bowing or squatting reverently before it. At first, I accepted this homage as the homage of subject to Emperor—the same sort of respect for the head of the State that, in Washington, sends an American on a pilgrimage to the White House to shake the hand of the President. I knew, of course, of the legend in the Kojiki that describes how, after the birth of the divine islands of Japan, the Sun Goddess decided to send down her grandson to rule over them. And I knew that the Emperors of Japan were said to have descended, in an unbroken line, from that grandson. I had read, in Mr. Isobe's translation, just at what point the god had become the first Emperor. Still, I had thought of all this as mythology, legend, a fictitious narrative—and I had supposed that the Japanese themselves thought of it the same way.

As time went on, however, it became obvious that, whether or not the Japanese actually believed their mythology, they were inordinately preoccupied with it. References to the "Age of Gods" were incessant—in conversation, in the newspapers, the magazines, the lectures given by professors of leading universities before groups of foreign scholars.

"It seems," began an article on "The History of Japanese Swimming," published in *The Japan Times*, "that in all countries, the art of swimming has been practised from the remotest ages, and in our country we find some descriptions of swimming in the traces of the age of gods which appear in Kojiki." Of all the lectures and demonstrations of Flower Arrangement and other aspects of Japanese culture given by professors from Japanese universities, and other experts which Dee and I had attended, there was not one but mentioned the divine descent of the Emperor; and the lectures traced the origin of every aspect of Japanese culture back to the gods, and not infrequently quoted directly from the Kojiki.

"The dance," said a professor from the Imperial University, "originated in the mythological age, when the eight hundred myriad deities assembled outside the Heavenly Rock Dwelling in which Amaterasu O-Mikami was hiding, and caused a wild, barbaric dance

to be performed in order to excite her curiosity and cause her to come forth."

"Music," another lecturer had told us, "shows a clear development from the age of gods and in this respect reminds one of the unbroken line of the ruling family from quite remote antiquity to the present. Certain ancient music is still performed in its early form, as for instance, the 'Kume-uta,' a military song used and perhaps composed by Jimmu *Tenno*, which is performed today in certain Imperial festivities in connection with the worship of ancestral deities."

With all this evidence and a great deal more before me, for I clipped such items from newspapers and filed the clippings away with my notes of the lectures, I decided to ask Akiko how seriously she took such matters. Finding her in her room laboriously translating into Japanese a volume of stories about China by Agnes Smedley, I sat down on the mats beside her, and—after some courtesy conversation—asked who the Emperor Jimmu was.

"First *Tenno* of Japan," she said promptly. *Tenno* is a religious title and is applied to the Emperor as high-priest of the national religion, Shinto.

I then asked her if she could explain to me the connection between the Sun Goddess and Jimmu *Tenno*.

There followed a long conversation. We had to go slowly, of course, referring to phrase books and dictionaries. But finally I learned this: That Akiko, and every other Japanese, had been taught in their modern schools the Kojiki legends that describe the sacred birth of the islands and the divine Emperor. Moreover, these legends were taught in the courses called History and Ethics.

The Emperor-*Tenno*, Akiko told me, was the father of his people—a kind father—and all Japan and all the people belonged to him. Whatever he decided for Japan was bound to be best for the country, and the people would always follow whatever he decided. In America, she asked, did we feel that way about our Great Man?

It did not, at the moment, seem possible for me to explain to Akiko the sentiments usually held for a Democratic President by a Republican Congressman (and vice versa), so, remembering that Alexander Hamilton once had served as a bond between America

and Japanese mythology, I told Akiko that in America, we too had a Father of our Country, that his name was George Washington, and that he would correspond to Jimmu *Tenno*, since he was the first historically substantiated President of the United States of America.

Akiko and I smiled at each other. Jimmu *Tenno*, emerging from the mythological mists in 660 B.C., was as real to her as George Washington was to me, and for the same reason. We had both been taught about them as children in school.

## V

### HOKKAIDO HOLIDAY

*"Shukan . . . It is the custom."* This was the phrase I heard oftenest during my first days of getting settled in Dee's home, and in going to my first entertainments. I was to hear it even more often, for now it was decided that I should join Chiyo and Tama for a two week's tour of the northern island, Hokkaido. It was the custom, Dee told me, for everyone who could, to leave Tokyo in summer when the humidity became intolerable; it was the custom, too, for everyone who could, sometime to visit Hokkaido.

Our Japanese friends, I discovered, knew almost nothing about this northern part of their country. This surprised me, for in preparation for the trip, I consulted all available authorities, and learned at once that the capital city, Hakodate, was only sixteen hours away from Tokyo, or approximately the distance from New York to Buffalo. The island, however, had not been colonized by the Japanese until well into the After-Perry era, and it was still considered by the average individual in much the same way that an eighteenth-century resident of Boston thought of California, or as the American today thinks of Alaska.

Neither Tama nor Dee could tell me what we were likely to do on this excursion. Her male relatives, Tama said, would go to the Government Tourist Bureau and would, with its help, work out an itinerary. We would not, she assured me, be permitted to miss any sights of importance, nor would we waste time on the trivial. I was

also told that Hokkaido was said to resemble America very closely; and that it was interesting to the Japanese especially as the home of the Ainu tribes—the aboriginal inhabitants of the Japanese Islands, who were kept on reservations, as “you Americans keep your Indians”; and because there were cows there, whence came the tinned butter and canned milk for the upper-class Japanese families. I also learned that currently the government was encouraging Japanese tourists to visit Hokkaido, and the railroads offered very cheap two-week round-trip tickets. It was then *shukan* to make this trip. Which is really why we made it.

For my part, I was looking forward to this chance to become friends with Tama and Chiyo—with Chiyo, especially, for to talk to Tama required long pauses while we both looked in our phrase books for words, and, although we actually covered an astonishing lot of ground, it was not like talking in one's own language. Chiyo, of course, as Dee had told me, spoke flawless English, as she naturally would, having lived most of her life in England. I had not yet met Chiyo, since she had been staying with her mother in the country, and although we had exchanged numerous messages, and had even several times made plans to meet, something had always prevented her coming. I did not therefore actually meet her until we both arrived at the station platform where we were to catch our train.

I greeted her with eagerness, admiring her chic. She was beautifully dressed in well-tailored natural linen and was groomed with a sheen and polish that would have done her credit on the Rue de la Paix. Actually, she looked French rather than Japanese—her nose slightly arched, cheek bones high, her eyes narrow but not obviously Oriental. She seemed all nerves, tense and energetic, and when she said, “How do you do,” in cultivated Oxford tones, I realized that if I had only heard her voice, I would have sworn she was English.

She was a startling contrast to her sister-in-law, Tama, who came up now, almost late for the train, wearing a lovely silk kimono with a splendid *obi*, carrying a blue silk umbrella, and a great bundle tied up in a multicoloured handkerchief. A maid and a porter followed her with a number of red wicker bags. Tama bowed and smiled,

taking her time—although I was momentarily afraid the train would go without us—showing the gold and platinum bands that adorned her teeth, wrinkling her little freckled nose, looking entirely soft and cuddly and charming. Beside her Chiyo, still and nervy, might have been of another race.

We said goodbye to Dee and Tama's husband, who had seen us off, and found our places at last. We were travelling third-class, which was *shukan*, except for foreigners and royalty and the extremely wealthy. This first leg of our journey involved a sleeper; a tier of three shelves facing three others with a foot of space between them—ranging crosswise in the car and duplicated down its length—opening on a narrow connecting corridor. The shelves were covered with plush and a thin strip of white cotton cloth, and were so narrow, that the occupant was kept from rolling out only by an arrangement of straps. Each shelf was so close to the one above that you could not sit upright, or even three-quarters. There were no curtains, except a scrap at the head, so that every passer-by could see you dressing, undressing, sleeping, scratching fleas, or whatever you happened to be doing.

My shelf was a middle one, and above me a gentleman vociferously slumbered. Tama stowed away below me. Across the aisle, Chiyo, declining conversation, stretched herself out on the middle shelf, between two gentlemen. One of the gentlemen wore a sort of balbriggan undergarment with a grey wrapper down to his knees. The other, who had embarked in correct foreign clothes, had removed them down to his undershirt and drawers. All of our shoes were aligned side by side on the floor below, and the train provided slippers.

At the end of the car an open alcove served as the dressing-room and five o'clock in the morning found us part of a queue, both men and women, waiting our turn to brush our teeth. Everybody behaved with complete lack of self-consciousness, dressing and undressing, bathing, gargling, rinsing, as unconcerned as though in his own home. Throughout my travels in Japan, I was to notice this self-centred composure.

We breakfasted on noodle soup and tea in a golden-oak diner, and while we ate I stared at the countryside. It was a sea of rice

paddies in a narrow valley, backed up to low, mist-covered hills. An occasional cluster of small thatched cottages, walled in by a clump of bamboo, stood marooned in a sea of rice. The only life was an infrequent group of farm folk working in the paddy-fields. Chiyo answered all my conversational leads in monosyllables, and, as soon as she had finished, left the table.

We reached Omori at eight and rushed directly from the train to the boat. All the railroad staff were lined up on the platform doing their morning calisthenics to the bellow of a loudspeaker, which may have been the reason why we could not find a porter.

Hokkaido is separated from Honshu, the main island, by the Tsugaru Strait, a four-hour crossing. Although we were third-class, we had the run of the ship, which was somewhat larger than a Hudson River boat. In the third class, which was Japanese style, the passengers sprawled on the matting, sipping tea, playing checkers, looking at picture books—most of them in family parties with dozens of children and babies strapped to a hundred backs, looking tormented, but sleeping peacefully. On the first-class deck, gentlemen in polka-dotted vests and plus fours played shuffleboard in preparation, one of them confided, for an impending trip to America. As the only foreigner, I was something of a curiosity. One old gentleman in formal kimono, a fan sticking up from his sash in the rear like the jaunty tail of a cock, stood for some five minutes looking at me from head to foot with the cold, impersonal gaze of a biologist examining a particularly puzzling specimen. We lunched in the *à-la-carte*, first-class dining salon, and although we were early, around eleven, they were all out of everything on the card except a confusion of cold vegetables which they called “salad,” and a slice of grisly meat which they called “cold cuts.” Evidently not many people used this dining-room, for it was empty, except for perhaps a half-dozen men—all in Western clothes. We were the only women.

Meanwhile Tama made friends with an assortment of scattered tourists, and by the time we reached Hakodate, our party had been augmented by Miss Haru, who was on her way to visit an aunt in a Hokkaido village; Mr. Mura, who was a student in a dark blue uniform, complete with brass buttons and a battery of fountain pens; and Mr. Naka, a schoolteacher. Little Haru, like Tama, was all



pink and beige, and they hit it off at once, giggling and chattering together, obviously ready to enjoy everything that happened. Mr. Naka and Mr. Mura, like ourselves, were taking the two-week round-trip excursion; they were travelling together, and Mr. Mura had come all the way from Kyushu, which was more than a day's trip south of Tokyo. Since it was *shukan* to travel in a group, they were all glad to join our party. The gentlemen travelled with us until the next to the last day; and little Haru stayed with us for a week.

## 2

Hakodate, chief city of Hokkaido, appeared as a crescent harbour, and a multitude of low frame houses sprawled up a hillside behind it. Carrying our bags, we dashed off the boat in a compact group, surrendered our tickets at the gate with correct little bows, and immediately boarded a waiting train. I had hoped to sit with Chiyo and talk, but instead we all scattered about the car, and I was left to myself in two facing seats. Third-class seats are narrow and not upholstered; the backs are plank; and they are so close together that, if two people sit opposite each other, their feet on the floor, their knees would scrape. The Japanese solve this problem by not putting their feet on the floor. As soon as they take a seat, they slip off their clogs and pull their feet up under them. Now I removed my shoes, like a good Japanese, stretched out my feet on the seat opposite, and settled down to stare at the countryside that had begun to move past the train window at approximately five miles an hour.

This might have been Pennsylvania. The dark earth was covered with familiar crops. There were masses of wild grapes, orange daisies, and a profusion of flowering weeds. Its familiarity was a shock—so different from the endless, swimming rice paddies of Honshu! Crossing that brief channel, we had actually reached a different world. It was hot, but the humidity had vanished. This was familiar summer.

The train was a local, and the stops frequent—a little shed of a station, a few huddled huts in the midst of cultivated or weed-choked fields. The station platforms presented an entertaining

spectacle—a family party endlessly bowing the involved ritual of greeting; a farm woman, bending forward under the weight of a dozen bundles, dropping them in order to surrender her ticket to the official at the gate. My absorption was broken by a sharp tap on my ankles.

I looked up. Standing primly beside me was a Japanese gentleman. He was small, dapper, and most correctly dressed in grey flannel trousers, a black alpaca coat and a white straw hat. As I looked up, he tapped my ankles again lightly with his fan. I immediately withdrew my feet. Without a word, he sat down opposite me, removed his black pumps, turned his back to the window, swung his feet, neatly shod in grey silk socks, over the arm of the seat, and fanning violently, looked about him coldly through horn-rimmed spectacles.

Of our party, it was Tama and Haru who most enjoyed themselves. They sat across from me where I could watch them, and during the first three hours, they succeeded in driving me mad with curiosity. They both carried bundles tied up in multicoloured, cotton handkerchiefs (the *furoshiki*, the standard Japanese handbag), and they seemed to be playing a game with the bundles and little black books—each had one—which they would take from their bundles, look at, giggle over, and then tie up again. At the stations, they would rush out to the platform, books in hand, and would return, giggling, only to repeat the performance. Finally, of course, I followed them out to a station platform where they joined a great crowd of people. I peered over the crowd and saw that they were waiting beside a shelf attached to the wall of the waiting-room. On the shelf were chained a pad of green ink and a rubber stamp on a wooden handle with which everyone, in turn, was making an impression in a book. Tama suddenly saw me and beamed. "Stampu," she exclaimed, waving at the shelf. In turn, she printed a design in green on a blank page of her book. "Naisu stampu," she said, and handed it over for my inspection.

I looked at the nice stamp. I saw a circle an inch and a half in diameter that enclosed a complicated design. A jade-green train dashed out of a jade-green forest, belching clouds of green-bordered, white smoke. Mountains reared in the distance, and across them,

arched a green rainbow studded with five-petaled green flowers. At one side, in Chinese characters, was what I assumed to be the name of the station. Across the top I read 10/6/26. This looked like a date, but 10/6/26 should be October 6, 1926, and it was actually June 26, 1935. Tama explained it. The ten stood for the tenth year of the Showa Era which began when the present Emperor Hirohito ascended the Throne, and Japanese custom reverses ours, and puts the year date first. "*Kirci desu*" (how pretty), I murmured, feeling that this was too Japanese an occasion for comment in English. A wrinkled grandmother in the crowd overheard, and gave me a toothless grin of satisfaction as she went off—her small granddaughter, in sunrise pinks and reds, clutching her kimono sleeve in one hand, an open *stampu* book in the other.

This was my introduction to *stampu*, which, Tama assured me, was a very popular *shumi* or hobby. In fact, collecting these stamps was Tama's chief amusement on our excursion. Of course, I obtained a book at the first chance, and joined in the chase, for, not only were the designs themselves charming, but we found them in such unlikely places that hunting them taught me how indefatigable the Japanese are in following through on even the most trivial thing once it becomes the custom. We found them in a tiny resthouse on top of a glacial mountain; we found them in a small teahouse on an island in the middle of a volcanic lake. We found them at post offices, small shops, and at every inn—and by conscientious collecting, we had, by the time we reached Tokyo again, a complete record, in stamps, of our excursion. The *stampu*, moreover, served another purpose. It was necessary to take home to one's friends and relatives travellers' gifts. These gifts must be inexpensive, but must be suitable. The *stampu* were perfect, and everywhere I saw Japanese travellers pulling out from their *obi* or kimono sleeves bits of paper, postcards, fans, and other trifles, which they stamped with a frenzy while an anxious, but benevolent, railroad official looked on, watch in hand, waiting to release the train. Once in a crisis, an official actually held up the train for a few minutes until all of us had gathered our impressions.

As a matter of fact, I was always being surprised at the amount of cooperation we *stampu* fans received along the way—especially

from the railway officials. At one junction, the *stampu* was in the main station, across a dozen tracks—which fact Tama and I did not know in time to climb the stairs and cross the bridge over the tracks. Tama, holding her book helplessly, was in despair. A grim-looking official, wearing a stiff uniform, a visored cap and gold-rimmed spectacles, was standing near us. He took in the situation at a glance; clicked his heels, bowed stiffly, snatched our books, and sprinted, regardless of rules, across the tracks; and returned panting, with a beautiful impression for each of us.

This seemed to me remarkable enough, but an even odder adventure occurred a few days later. We were on a branch line for hours. Very few of the small stations had *stampu*, and at those, the train did not stop long enough for us to get one. Tama took this very seriously. She kept pursuing the conductor to ask if there were a *stampu* at the next stop, and would we stop long enough to get one? Each time after his negative, she would collapse and study her book with a fixed smile of deep dejection. Finally her distress was too much for the conductor. He wrote out a telegram, announcing the approach of a *stampu* fan, which he tossed to a station master as we moved slowly through his depot, yelling instructions to wire it to the station ahead. As the train pulled into that station, the official, who had received the wire, appeared, pad and *stampu* in hand. Tama was fluttering in our open window, holding out her book, her arms in their long sleeves tossing like aspens in a gale. Although our train did not stop, the station master rushed out to our window; and trotted beside us until Tama had received a clear impression.

This amusing paternalism was, I learned later, just one more illustration of the constant concern of the government for the smallest activity of the people. Japanese railroads are owned and operated by the government, and all employees of the railroads are, therefore, government officials, persons of importance, treated with vast respect by all the travellers. Yet they did not consider it beneath their dignity to cooperate in the furtherance of this national hobby. For a very good reason. The *stampu* had become a national hobby as a direct response to the activities of the same propaganda bureau that had, in Tokyo, revived the folk-dancing. The custom of collecting stamps had originated in the religious pilgrimage. Members of

various Buddhist, or Shinto, sects tried, during their lifetime, to make a pilgrimage to all the different temples or shrines of their order. Pilgrims wear flowing, white robes, and, at each temple visited, the seal of that temple would be stamped on the robe as a souvenir of the visit. Some member of the government's propaganda bureau had had the bright idea of having such stamps put into railroad stations as an added inducement to travel. They wished to encourage travel, not only in order to increase revenue, but as part of their campaign to familiarize the people with the national memorials, historic places, and Great Sights in general. The *stampu* had caught on at once, and soon could be discovered from one end of Japan to the other, not only at railroad stations, and inns, but also at *depato*, small shops, theatres and movie houses. Tama confided that she had been collecting them for ages, and had at least a dozen books full at home. They were a perfect Japanese hobby—attractive, colourful, endlessly varied, and they cost nothing except a small sum for a book to keep them in.

## 3

We left Hakodate at noon. We reached Sapporo, second most important city of Hokkaido, at seven. While we were gathering our bags together, a man in uniform came to the door of the car and made a brief speech in crackling phrases that sounded like commands. He then made his way to our group, and, after an exchange of questions and answers, escorted us to the platform. It was black as the deepest night. There was not a sound or a light anywhere. "Is this really Sapporo?" I asked. Chiyo said, "Hush." Carrying our bags, we stumbled through the gloom until we passed through the station and came out on to a street. Darkness everywhere. The officer made a short speech, bowed and left us. Mr. Naka went off, I knew not where, and the rest of us huddled in a group beside the road. Suddenly, there was a low rumble and the sky was split with a brilliant flash. Darkness. Another rumble. A roar. Mr. Naka returned and there was a whispered conference. "Please, what is it?" I whispered. Chiyo said, "Hush."

A black object appeared in front of us—a taxi running without

lights. We got in and went off over a bumpy road for perhaps twenty minutes. It stopped and we climbed out. The taxi rolled away, leaving us in the middle of a muddy road. On one side we could see the vague outline of a low building that looked like a shed. Across the street was a row of small houses and tiny shops, from which came a dim light or two. Silhouetted against the paper wall of one house, lighted by a flickering candle, was a man taking a bath.

Above us came a drone in the black sky, followed at once by a series of brilliant flashes and roars. "Oh, what is it!" I cried. "Is it an air-road? Is it war?"

"No," Mr. Naka answered. "Not war—yet," he laughed, and then said, "Air-raid defence manœuvres." Then I remembered. The manœuvres had been held in Tokyo the week before, but only in the central city where I had not seen them. They were to be held all over the country, but on the stagger system, because—rumour in Tokyo had it—there were not enough planes to hold them throughout the country simultaneously. The manœuvres had obviously followed us north and had now caught up with us in Hokkaido.

I stared up at the sky. Standing here on this muddy road among the darkened little shacks the importance of these defence manœuvres suddenly struck me. The Japanese were afraid of being attacked, and were taking precautions against it. But attacked by whom? The "Manchurian Incident" had matured with no very serious objections against it by anyone. The Chinese national government, under Chiang Kai-shek, had not only not sent troops against the Japanese, but had ordered Chang Hseuh-liang, the warlord of Manchuria, to withdraw. Secretary Stimson of our American State Department had announced that America would not recognize the conquest, but that had been more than four years before, and our Congress had been unwilling to give this verbal protest any reality. Britain's government had also declined to take measures to stop Japan. The League of Nations, appealed to by the Chinese government, had done nothing but utter a mild reproof, and not even this, until two years after the Incident. Meanwhile, the Japanese puppet-state, Manchukuo, had become a *fait accompli*; and the Japanese had steadily continued to encroach southward toward Peiping with hardly a protest from anyone. Chiang Kai-shek had continued to

use his soldiers against the Chinese so-called "Red Armies," and had—at Japan's request—withdrawn all government troops from the northern provinces of China Proper. The Japanese were apparently sitting pretty—then why were they afraid, and why were they preparing against attack?

There was no opportunity to discuss these matters with my companions, because now a man came toward us with a flashlight and led us up to a station platform and into an electric trolley. I ventured to ask Chiyo where we were going.

"To Josankai."

"What is Josankai?"

"A village. Hush!" I was silent. We all found places and sat down. The car was shuttered tight and lighted only by a large oil lantern, shrouded in a black cloth, and the perhaps half-dozen passengers were mere blobs in the darkness. We rode in silence and sepulchral gloom for more than a half-hour, and then alighted on another pitch-black platform. With a man guiding us, we walked for some time along a muddy road, carrying our bags. We stopped at last in the darkness; and the man called out softly. The blackness before us rolled back, like a curtain, to disclose a group of little maids kneeling in a hallway. They began to bow and wave their sleeves and murmur polite phrases, barely visible in the dim light of a black-shrouded oil lantern—the only illumination permitted during the defence manoeuvres. This place, of course, was an inn.

My thought was, "Dinner, at last!" In so thinking, I had forgotten *shukun*.

We left our shoes at the door. The gentlemen were taken to the right and we, escorted by a bevy of little maids—one of whom carried a candle—went off to the left, to a room which we four females, according to custom, were to share. With Chiyo and I looking very "foreign" and awkward and out-of-place lurking at the outskirts, we were given cushions, tea, innumerable bows and courteous phrases—while shadows cast by a shrouded lantern mimicked our movements against the paper walls, adding to the unreality of the scene. For ten hours we had had nothing to eat. We had been travelling all day. Yet if Tama and Haru and the little maids thought of this they gave no sign. In slow-motion, they

went through the elaborate formalities of being made welcome. Once Chiyo interposed sharply in Japanese asking, I supposed, for a bath or some dinner. At this the tableau froze; the little maids sat motionless; and it was only after Tama had repeatedly bowed, smiled and cooed, that they thawed again into movement.

Then there was the register to sign. This took more than half an hour, since it asked of all of us our names, parents' names, ages, occupation, home-address, reason for being in Josankai, where we had come from, and where we were going. This, I learned, was the routine registration required of all hotels and inns throughout the Empire. By means of this record, the police have before them constantly the complete details of every traveller. The questions also supplied material for conversation and there was much courteous chatter before the task was finished.

However, at last we were settled. The maids brought us blue and white cotton kimonos to sleep in, and padded kimonos to lounge in. It is the custom, Dee had explained before leaving home, for all Japanese inns to supply kimonos, slippers, and sometimes even a toothbrush wrapped in tissue. The traveller must have his own soap, toilet paper, and *tenugui*, a length of blue and white cotton which is all the Japanese use as a towel. These necessities every traveller carries with him in colourful little rubberized bags. We all undressed at once. Tama and Haru each retired to a corner and turned their backs to the room, and soon the place was littered with their gigantic sashes and kimonos. They each slipped into the inn-supplied kimonos, folded their own things neatly and placed them in a large wicker basket in one corner of the room. Then, sitting on their heels, they began to rip from the inside of the neck of their own kimonos the light pink band that protects the kimono itself. This, Tama assured me, must be fresh each day.

I was starving. I mentioned dinner. Tama looked astonished at the idea. "*Hotto* bath," she said. This inn was a hot-spring resort, and one of the reasons for touring Hokkaido was to bathe in the hot-springs. It was obvious that we were going to bathe in them. At this moment a man came to our door, which he slid open without warning, to remain kneeling at the threshold. Tama and Haru received him with beautiful formality. He was the *banto*, the



functionary who would lead us to the *hotto* bath. His candle lighted us, in a long, ghostly procession, down a dozen corridors, up and down a dozen levels—for the inn was built against a hillside—into, at last, a small room. Here we must leave our kimonos piled neatly in baskets. He held the candle so that we might see. A door opened from the dressing-room and led into the baths. He showed us this door, and departed, taking the candle with him.

The bathroom was a vast chamber, lighted now only by a single, shrouded lantern. I saw a small pool in one corner and a spreading lake, from which came the sound of splashing and laughter. A man's voice called "*Hai!*"

"*Hai!*" called Tama and Haru. The gentlemen were there before us.

Mr. Naka now called out something in Japanese, which he then repeated in English for my benefit, "The water is too hot, is it?"

"*Sodesu*" ("Yes, of course"), Tama called back, and they all roared with laughter, for this was a great joke, for the water could not possibly be too hot. I knew, of course, that it was the custom at the hot-spring baths for men and women to bathé in the same room. Nevertheless it amused me now to see Tama's complete unself-consciousness, for I remembered that in undressing she had modestly turned her back to the room. But modesty, of course, had nothing to do with it. Each was *shukan*.

I watched Tama now to learn the correct custom for bathing. Scattered about on the lattice floor were dozens of little wooden tubs and wooden stools. Tama filled one of the tubs from the steaming lake, sat down on a little stool, got out her soap and scrubbed thoroughly; another tub of water for a good rinse. (The gentlemen were splashing about in the dusky gloom—urging speed—for the bath was unusually fine.) Ready at last, Tama went to the pool, slipped into it, and sat beaming, the water up to her chin. We all followed as soon as possible. The water was almost unbearably hot at first, but I soon got used to it. It smelled faintly of sulphur. It was deliciously relaxing.

The gentlemen joined us for dinner—oh, great adventure! for when travelling certain laxities are permitted. It was served around ten-thirty, with slow-motion ceremony—fish soup, and raw fish, and

fish fried in pastry batter, rice, and—actually—dessert, a cream-coloured custard decorated with two pink and one cream-coloured cherry. Everything was beautifully arranged in lacquer bowls and porcelain dishes, and the colours and textures had all been chosen for their pictorial values. We finished with tea, which was served at eleven-thirty. During all this no one spoke a word except the necessary polite phrases. I was silent from fatigue; my friends, from *shukan*.

After dinner the gentlemen left at once, and we were put to bed by three little maids and the *banto*. They brought out four mattresses from the cupboards, put them side by side—almost touching—on the mats, and made them up with one sheet each, and a padded quilt, shaped like a kimono with sleeves, and pillows that were apparently stuffed with cement. Our beds made, they closed our wooden panels tightly against the demon-haunted night air, and left us. It was just after midnight. As I put my head on my arm, I could hear my watch ticking. It seemed to be saying, "*Mada mada*."

It said something very different the next morning, for we were aroused at a little before four by a maid who, decorative and ceremonious even at this hour, presented us with tea and a plate of scarlet bitter plums. This, I learned later, is the customary start for a proper day, for the bitter plums are both beautiful and laxative. At 4.30 or so the *banto* and his escort of maids appeared, opened wide our outside doors, letting in a flood of mist-heavy chilly air, and as we rolled from our mattresses, began to stuff them back into the cupboards, and to sweep and mop with such a frenzy of house-keeping that I was glad to seize my rubber-bag and follow my friends to the corridor where, standing at a cement trough in a queue of bowing neighbours, we waited to wash our faces. We dressed in a grey mist. It was apparently not *shukan* to close the doors. At five a maid came, bringing a brazier of burning charcoal over which she hung a kettle of water. At 5.30 came the ballet called breakfast.

With breakfast, came a major crisis. It was, of course, a Japanese breakfast—fermented bean-soup, bitter seaweed and raw egg, tea and rice. Tama and Haru accepted this calmly, and so did I, since I naturally expected, travelling with Japanese, to follow Japanese

custom. But Chiyo would have none of it. With an expression of a pioneer routing a horde of savages, she brought out a knapsack and produced coffee, bread, butter, and—I shall never forget it—marmalade. She demanded of the little maid something to make coffee in. The maid did not understand. There was a battle of *shukan* vs. Western custom for some time, but eventually, the maid, her face blank with disapproval, brought in a teapot. Using water from the kettle on the brazier, Chiyo made coffee. She also made toast, broiling it over the charcoal.

Feeling like a barbarian, I drank a cup of coffee and ate a piece of toast. Haru and Tama meanwhile went into convulsions of etiquette to sooth the injured feelings, not only of the maid, but of Madame, the proprietress, who came to inquire why her breakfast was rejected. Finding me with a piece of toast in my hand saved the day, for everyone knows foreigners are unpredictable.

## 4

We had gone to Josankai because, in touring Hokkaido, it was *shukan* to go there. Having been there, we could depart. I did not at first understand this simple matter, so, sitting beside Chiyo on the electric trolley that was taking us away at 6.30 in the morning after our one-night stand, I asked her why we had gone to Josankai, and why we were leaving. She said:

"Josankai is one of the famous places."

"Famous for what?" I asked.

"Famous for the scenery and the hot-spring baths."

"Then why don't we stay and bathe and look at the scenery?"

"There isn't time. We have only two weeks, and there is all of Hokkaido."

We had gone to Josankai merely to say we had been there! The Japanese tourist, like the tourist of any nation, is content to view as he runs. All over Europe, I had seen groups of harassed Americans and English, chaperoned by Thomas Cook, rapidly dashing from cathedral to museum to train. Heretofore, I had always managed to avoid such strenuousness. Now for my sins, I was at last trapped and bound. . . . Tama was nudging me. As I turned she motioned

toward a group sitting opposite—a family party—mother, father and student son—who had crossed on the boat with us. They too had spent the night at Josankai. We all exchanged bows and smiles, pleasantly conscious of having done the correct thing together.

The trolley took us to Naebo where we caught a local train at 8 a.m. The cars were crowded with people and poultry, and littered with chopsticks, teapots, cigarette stubs. A porter, his nose protected with a scrap of black gauze, went incessantly through the train collecting the litter. Most of the passengers were local—farmers with skintight blue trousers and cloven socks, and their wives, mothers and babies—but there was one man in Western clothes, a number of parties of tourists from the mainland, and dozens of university students on the summer holidays, all looking exactly alike—dark uniform and geometrical cap and clipped hair.

Most of the time, I sat separated from my companions. Chiyo had said, "We'll have more room alone," and marched off to the end of the car, although it was obvious that we would not be alone since the train was crowded. All day long, I had a succession of neighbours, most of whom tried to talk to me. An ancient farmer poked my knees with his finger, talking excitedly, evidently quite annoyed at my failure to understand. The men in Western clothes came to ask me, in halting English, the usual questions: where was I from, where was I going, what did I seek in Hokkaido? The students came to practise their English—asking the same conventional questions, as though it were a lesson learned, as, of course, it was—a lesson learned in their English classes, like the French an American learns in school, "*Fait-il chaud aujourd'hui? Non, il fait assez froid pour la saison.*" Question and answer, and I was supposed to give the correct answer. Sometimes there would be an amusing variation from some advanced student as when, for instance, one of them asked me, "What is your ultimate desire?" I shall always wonder what answer their English grammars supplied for that one.

These students had solved the problem of inexpensive touring. They travelled at night, sleeping upright on the hard benches, ate noodle soup or cold rice bought at the stations, and did their sight-seeing by day. They could go from one end of their country to the

other on a two weeks' tour and spend little more than the round-trip fare.

We lunched at two. This was a mystery, for we had passed through dozens of stations where I could plainly see food for sale in little booths. All about me people were eating. I was able to buy a pot of tea with a little cover-cup for five sen, but whenever I attempted to buy food, Tama rushed at me, saying, "*Mada mada*," with such emotion that I always refrained. Finally, however, Tama came up to me beaming and presented two little packages which she had purchased at the last stop. "*Bento*," she announced. At this my Japanese neighbours offered to exchange seats with Tama and Haru in order that we might lunch together. The *bento* seemed to correspond roughly to the American waxed-paper-wrapped sandwich. There were two little boxes, beautifully wrapped, in a paper cover decorated with the picture and name of the town where Tama had bought them. There were also a pair of wooden chopsticks and a toothpick. One of the boxes contained cold rice; the other was divided into an intricate pattern with wooden partitions, and each partition contained something different—an arrangement of small lacquered fish, a bit of pink grilled salmon, a crinkly brown fungus, a scrap of scarlet gingerroot, a coil of green seaweed. It looked charming. Tama managed to explain to me that we had waited for this station because it was celebrated for its *bento*. Every station, she said, had a different one, but some were more famous than others. Since this was a famous *bento*, the wrapping made a fine travellers' gift, and Tama and Haru packed theirs away carefully in their *obis*. When I gave mine to Tama, she received it, not only with ceremonious gratitude, but genuine emotion. It seemed perfectly obvious that it was not the food we had been waiting for, but the wrapper!

Late that afternoon, the defence manœuvres caught up with us again. We were meandering through pleasant meadow-land, when the conductor came in and shouted a command, at which everyone immediately shuttered up his window tightly. There were no lights in the car, the stuffy blackness was oppressive, and risking a reprimand, I went out into the vestibule where I found Mr. Naka and Mr. Mura standing on the steps, looking toward the sky. As I

appeared Mr. Naka greeted me, and pointed upward. "A hit," he said, and laughed. Mr. Mura gave me his place on the steps, and looking where Mr. Naka pointed I saw a puff of smoke against a pale sky and a plane circling. It was dropping bombs—not real bombs, of course, but the sort used in war-games.

"Why are you having such manœuvres?" I asked. "Does Japan expect to be attacked?"

"*Sal!*" He pointed again. I could see a whole burst of white puffs as the plane circled. It was a solitary plane and I could not see much sense in what it was doing. Perhaps because I am not a military expert. "To be attacked?" Mr. Naka echoed. "*Sodesu*. Of course, yes, we will be attacked."

"By whom?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Who knows? Perhaps Britain. Perhaps America. Perhaps Russia. Perhaps all of you." He laughed.

I climbed back up into the vestibule, and Mr. Naka climbed up beside me. I said, "Why should America attack Japan?"

"To help Britain, naturally." Mr. Naka looked at me with scant respect. As a woman, I would not be expected by a Japanese man to know much about international politics. I persisted, however. I wanted to know what the Japanese thought about this.

"To help Britain do what?" I asked.

"To protect her interests in China. To exclude Japan from trade with her Empire."

"And you think, to accomplish these things, America and Britain will attack you?"

"With force, perhaps not. With boycotts, and blockades, yes. I think it. All Japan thinks it. And when that happens, do you think we cannot fight to defend ourselves from such smothering? And if we fight, well, perhaps we will be bombed." He laughed again.

I spoke very slowly. "If Japan is bombed, she will be to blame, won't she? After all, you started the bombing yourselves. You attacked the Chinese in Manchuria by force, and created Manchukuo by force. If you wish not to fear attack, you should yourselves avoid attacking others."

Mr. Naka shrugged. "You Western peoples are so virtuous. You

forget that it was your people, not the Japanese, who invented bombs and airplanes, and first used them in war. You forget that the interests which Britain wishes to protect in China and in her Empire were taken by force. We Japanese can see that the white races think aggression is wrong only if it is by a coloured race against a white race."

I interrupted. "But if you are going to call your people a coloured race, then the Chinese are coloured too. And it is the Chinese whom you have attacked."

"No." Mr. Naka's emotion was rising so that he had some difficulty in keeping his voice level. "No! It is not the Chinese whom we attacked. We must have peace with China. We cannot survive without peace with China. But the national government of China is today as much a puppet government of Britain as Manchuria is the puppet of my country. We cannot trust the national government. We must be able to depend on the government of China for we are alone in the world, and we are at the mercy of you Western powers. We are encircled everywhere with enemies. We must be prepared. As our *Tenno* has told us, our crisis is now, and also in the future."

There was no mistaking his sincerity. This was how the international situation looked to him, a Japanese. I wished to argue further, but now the conductor came up and angrily waved us inside the coach. He followed us in, and began to bang up the shutters. Evidently we had run out of the field of manoeuvres. All through the car people began opening their shutters, giggling and whispering. I did not feel at all satisfied to stop our talk and looked at Mr. Naka to suggest he return with me to my seat, but a man, wearing Western clothes, sitting near the door, had stopped him, and they were conversing together. Mr. Mura, however, who had stood listening to the talk without speaking, followed me and, as I sat down, said shyly, "Please may I speak with you?"

I said, "Please," and he sat beside me.

It was never easy to talk to these university students, because they were both shy and arrogant. They hated to admit not knowing the language perfectly, and were usually on the defensive against getting into conversations that went beyond the question and answer

of their lessons. Now, however, Mr. Mura seemed to be struggling with ideas of his own.

"Please," he began, "you not think America attack Japan?"

I chose my words carefully. "I think America will not attack Japan."

He looked troubled. "My teachers say that all Western nations are our enemies." He hesitated for a moment, and then asked, "What do you think of the Italo-Abyssinian War?"

The connection between the questions was not immediately clear, and my first reaction was disappointment. This question was one of the "polite" questions asked as a kind of routine by anyone who wanted to practise English, so I knew it was a question included in the English-study courses. It had puzzled me that such a question should be considered "polite," when usually any mention of Manchuria was taboo. I did not, of course, want to tell him that America considered Mussolini a bandit, because I did not want to guide his answer. I, therefore, told him what was true, that I had left America early in the year, before the Abyssinian affair had become news, and asked him to tell me what Japan thought of it.

"We Japanese are always for the underdog," he said. "So we feel sympathy for the Abyssinians."

That was the correct answer. I was supposed to bow and smile and say that that was very noble of the Japanese. Instead, I asked, "Do the Japanese feel that way about the Chinese? What do you think about your military occupation of Manchuria?"

For a moment, I thought he was going to give me an answer, then his face went blank, and he seemed not to have heard the question. I repeated it slowly, and this time said Manchukuo. He had a round boyish face, which now expressed embarrassment. "I am sorry," he said. "But that is a question about which I have no opinion."

I tried a different approach. "What do you, yourself, think about the Italo-Abyssinian War?"

He seemed now again on firm ground. "I think Italy is wrong. It is pure aggression. I feel sympathy for the Abyssinians. They are a coloured race. We Japanese, we, too, are a coloured race. Coloured races are at the mercy of the white races. The white races



say that nations should settle their problems by talk. But they do not mean it. Abyssinia belong to the League of Nations, but the League do not stop Mussolini. The League is not honest. It do not mean what it say. Japan was right to leave the League."

"You really believe this?" I asked.

"*Sodesu*. I believe it. All Japanese believe like this. Our teachers tell us in our classrooms. Our respected great men tell us on the radio. The coloured races must help each other."

He had given me another lead and I took it. "Was Japan helping the coloured races by attacking and annexing Manchuria?"

He was excited now, and forgot that he had no opinion about this. "*Sodesu*. Japan must save China from Western imperialism. Japan will soon be attacked by Russia perhaps, surely by Great Britain helped by America. If Japan do not protect interests in Manchuria, Japan will be destroyed, and China annexed by Russia or Britain."

"What nonsense!" I almost said, but stopped in time. Instead, I asked what made him think that Japan was to be attacked soon.

At this he looked puzzled as though he could not understand my asking a question that he had already answered. He said, "Our *Tenno* has said it. When we resigned from League of Nations, our *Tenno* tell us of the Crisis."

As we were silent for a moment, I thought back to my first afternoon in Japan, when a radio had brought us a political speech about some crisis that Nobu had refused to discuss. Now I felt I knew what that radio speech had said, for both Mr. Naka and Mr. Mura had just been telling me. Japan was in a state of crisis, because Japan, on leaving the League, had been afraid that the Western powers would retaliate by boycotting or blockading her—shutting her off from supplies and markets. The people of Japan were being warned to expect a showdown with the Western powers over their Manchurian Incident. And as a justification for the Incident, the rulers could tell the people—with facts to back them up—that the League was dishonest since it did not stop Mussolini in Abyssinia! The opinions of this student, and his teacher, Mr. Naka, as well, had been formed by propaganda. It was, moreover, from a Japanese point of view, very effective propaganda. It could be illustrated by

most of the facts of Far Eastern history, since the late nineteenth century. It could be illustrated by today's headlines. For it was true that the Western powers had opened both China and Japan to trade by force or a show of force. And it was true that, had the League been what it claimed to be, the Japanese would have been forced out of Manchuria at once; and Mussolini would not have dared to invade Ethiopia. How different the world looked when viewed from Japan. What words could I use to show this student that Japan's activities in Manchuria were aggression, no matter how dishonest the League was?

I had no opportunity to find these words. For at this moment, the man in the Western suit, who had stopped Mr. Naka, approached us, and tapping the student sharply on the arm with his fan, waved him away. Mr. Mura rose and went off down the aisle; and the man seated himself beside me. I thought he wanted to practise his own English and turned to him with some courtesy speech. He ignored me. I tried again, but he continued to look straight before him, without answering. He sat beside me until we reached Kamikawa at five-ten. Here we left the train, and he disappeared.

A certain feeling of discomfort over this whole adventure was soon jounced out of me by the wildest ride of my life. Following my companions, I found myself packed into a bus that was about the size of a baby Austin, and full to bulging with tourists and local farm folk, and their assorted luggage and bundles. I sat on Chiyo's leather case in the aisle. The oldest lady in Hokkaido, the size of a large doll, a few grey hairs pulled tightly back from a wrinkled forehead to a hard knot at the back of her head, sat primly, hands folded in lap, on a small campstool between my knees. As the bus jounced over a road that would make the bed of a river seem the finest new highway, she rose straight up in the air, descended, rose, and never once did she change the position of her hands in her lap or in any manner betray the slightest discomfort, despite the fact that it was impossible for me not to keep jabbing her with my knees as the gyration of this strange conveyance tossed me here and there, up and down on the sharp clasps of Chiyo's bag, now with the end of a tourist's stick pressing into my spine, now with the iron of the campstool threatening to sever my foot from my ankle.

It was pouring, and the windows were opaque with steam. There was supposed to be glorious scenery and the little conductorette kept up a rapid-fire description of the invisible countryside in a high sing-song falsetto which Chiyo finally translated: "Oh, there is the god, the rock-that-never-grows-older, oh, it is something splendid! Oh, there is the goddess waterfall, peach-blossoms-in-the-moonlight. Oh, it is something to see!" A group of three students with Leica cameras kept taking pictures through the misty windows.

The ride lasted for over an hour, during which period the bus lost a tyre and an old gentleman his hat. Neither occurrence upset anyone. The tyre, by some fluke, was the spare, and the driver just left it beside the road with the hat for company. Everybody thought everything a great joke, and when a particularly vicious lurch sent all of us up to the roof and back in a pile in the middle of the bus, everybody laughed uproariously. Opposite me a young man gave a perfect exhibition of poise. He slept throughout the entire trip, his head resting alternately on the shoulders of his two neighbours, who seemed in no way discomfited thereby. More dead than alive, we oozed out like paste from a crushed tube at the Sounkyo Hotel in the Daisetsuzan National Park. We had put in a twelve-hour day of solid travel.

## 5

The Daisetsuzan Park is a gorge—a deep steamy valley, overawed by giant firs, glacial peaks, and plunging waterfalls. We went there because it was "one of the famous places." Its attractions were a glacial peak to climb and hot spring-baths to soak in. We arose at five in the morning after our twelve-hour day of travel, in order to climb this peak, and after extensive preparations, all started out together. We registered with the police at the foot of the mountain; started to climb; became separated—and it was not until I returned to the inn late in the afternoon that I learned that while Chiyo and I actually made the climb, the others had turned back almost at once, and had spent the day sensibly collecting *stampu* and soaking in the hot-springs. Apparently rising, dressing, and registering for the climb were every bit as good as actually doing it.

We stayed at Daisetsuzan Park for two nights and then went tearing on. We kept tearing. Tearing is, of course, not the right word, for although our forward movement was persistent, and our activities constant, a great deal of it was rushing rapidly in the same place. We arose every morning at five even when, from an American's point of view, there was no reason to do so. The reason was *shukan*. This early rising, which is the general habit of the country, is not a sign of industry. It is a sign of *mada mada*. In Japan it is necessary to get up early because it takes so long to do anything. If we had a train to make at 6.30, we could just make it by receiving our bitter plum at 3.45. There was no way to hurry affairs. Every act had to be performed in the traditional manner. All this took time.

Travel also took time. Our average day's jaunt was around 250 miles. The average time to cover that distance was twelve and a half hours. There was always an epileptic bus to begin and end the day, frequently a walk through mud, carrying our bags, and usually rain. The trains were all alike, ten freight cars loaded with kegs of fish or crates of beer, and two very crowded day coaches. We stopped every five minutes at some little cluster of huts, or an occasional larger junction point, then jogged on again. It was just as well that we only jogged, for any speed above ten miles an hour sent the train into convulsions. The Japanese, lulled by this motion, slept peacefully in remarkably gymnastic poses, or—cloven socks pulled up under them—stared at the foreigner unblinkingly for hundreds of miles.

The hot-spring baths were the most delightful part of the trip. The bathrooms were enormous, walled in glass or enclosed with paper panels that were usually open, and they fronted on deep woods or the public highway with equal unconcern. There were often as many as twenty different pools under one roof, the smallest large enough to swim in, and the largest a lake. Not infrequently there would be a half-dozen different sorts of thermal waters under one roof, from simple saline, to sulphur, to radio-active.

The fact that these waters had medicinal value and could be used internally as well as externally, had been called to the attention of the Japanese by Western science, but for centuries the hot-springs

had been chiefly important as a solution for the problem of running hot water. Since even running cold water is still a luxury for private homes, to have a constant supply of hot water gushing up from the ground is a blessing the Japanese take full advantage of. Hotels and inns use nature's central heating system; the public-baths are built on top of hot-springs whenever possible; and even private individuals manage to utilize them—the wealthy by building their summer villas near a spring and piping the water into their own bath—the poor by bathing out-of-doors in the lakes and rivers where the hot-springs bubbling up through the water make natural warm pools. Throughout Hokkaido we found such pools. We saw also private out-of-door bath-houses consisting of a great wooden vat into which poured a constant supply of water—both cold and hot—flowing through pipes thrust into a mountainside.

In the hot-spring inns both men and women bathe together with no self-consciousness, but art requires that as you wander from pool to pool, testing the temperature and the smell, you hold a scrap of decorative towelling in the position made famous by September Morn. It gives a touch of intentional design, and turns the whole thing into theatre, at once naïve and formal. At first, it seemed odd to me to share a steaming pool with a fellow traveller, or an unknown grandfather; but not for long. My presence caused no stir whatsoever. In the baths, people soak and gossip with their friends and pay no attention to anyone else. As a solace for a day of travel, there could be no happier remedy than the warmth and camaraderie of a hot-spring bath.

Eventually, we visited an Ainu reservation. The village itself looked rather gay, since the houses were made of tufted straw and startlingly suggested the skirts of a Javanese dancer. The people, however, looked diseased and slatternly. Their livelihood was apparently fishing—for the village fronted the sea—and the tourist industry, for when I began to take snapshots I was immediately surrounded by dozens of children, holding out their hands, demanding fifty sen each for a picture. Our party was at once annexed by a guide, who took us, practically by force, to the home of the Chief of the Tribe, who—surrounded by a crowd of Japanese tourists like ourselves—was putting on a vaudeville show, at fifty sen apiece. It

concluded with a prepared harangue about the ancient splendour of the Ainu race and the nobility of the conquering Japanese. At the close the Chief was joined by certain men and women of his household who performed an ancient tribal dance not without spirit, whooping and yelling and waving swords while the wood-shavings that made the Chief's headdress bobbed and swayed against the waves of his long black hair. It was so obviously part of the government railway's entertainment for the tourist trade that it was very depressing.

The government railway had more than one trick up its sleeve to entice the tourist. I learned almost at once that our tour was carefully planned, that the places we visited were *the* places, and that everywhere there was *the* hotel, *the* bath, *the* view (whether a thin trickle of water, a pool of bubbling mud, or a spectacular volcanic lake, was all one to the touring Japanese), which it was necessary to have visited, or the trip was a failure.

But how, I wondered, did they manage to make the inaccessible and undramatic places, *the* places? I found a clue to this mystery at Akanko—a resort that offered no attraction other than a handful of weatherbeaten shacks, country roads infested with mosquitoes the size of pigeons, a lake, and a mountain. Yet, we made there our longest stay—three days—the first of which was given over to negotiations with *the* hotel, which was crowded, and which we must stop at . . . or why come to Akanko? At length, we were installed in a largish room that had, to offset the rather intense smell of sewage, a fine view of the spectacular sunrises and sunsets. It was a very special room, as I learned to my sorrow, for we were disturbed at half-hour intervals by troops of school-children who, *en tour* in buses, chaperoned by teachers, came and went every hour of the day and night, and who invariably rushed at once up the stairs to inspect our room. It was, it seemed, the room once occupied by an Imperial Prince when he was making this identical tour! Here was sufficient justification for a visit to Akanko—for what was good enough for an Imperial Prince, was good enough for every touring Japanese.

This Prince was remarkably peripatetic. Once he had been called to our attention, we found him everywhere . . . in fact, the more

inaccessible the place, the more prominently had the Prince been there. A small teahouse, squatting on the summit of a glacial mountain, had been honoured by the cup of tea he had consumed under its battered roof; on the shores of improbable Masugo stood the pavilion that had been erected to shelter his "viewing." We kept running upon him in such unlikely places that finally I must confess I was attacked by the unworthy suspicion that this Royal tour had been expressly arranged as a gesture of co-operation with the government's campaign to make Hokkaido the "Playground of Japan."

## 6

As a final grain added to a chemical solution will suddenly cause crystallization, so this episode of the Prince seemed to confirm certain notions about the Japanese that had struck me in Tokyo, and had been constantly reinforced during our tour. The values of the Japanese are almost entirely social and literary. My companions, and the other tourists whom we constantly ran into, seemed actually never to have a direct relation with any phase of our journey. What was important to them was always some idea of a thing, rather than the thing itself. The dreary, isolated village was glamorous because an Imperial Prince had once visited it; the fascination of some view, or waterfall, or lake did not depend on its intrinsic loveliness, but rather on some superreality which might consist of social, historical, legendary or religious overtones, or might be merely the recommendation of the Government Tourist Bureau. The satisfaction of climbing a mountain was not the individual's experience, but the sense of conforming to some socially acceptable routine. These Japanese tourists seemed to gain their highest satisfaction from their participation in design, their fitting into an ordered plan, their conformity with *shukan*. And the simplest act of daily life, because of the inevitability of the formulæ involved, became transmuted into a significant ritual. The Japanese, to an astonishing degree, lived in a make-believe world. A world in which their environment was not what it actually was, but what they pretended it was.

Of nothing was this more true than in the department of food.

My Japanese companions (Chiyo excepted, and Chiyo had spent most of her life in England) seemed literally never to be hungry. They would delay lunch for hours in order to get a special *bento*-wrapper; the delay caused by the involved ritual of arrival at an inn never made them impatient; at dinner they would admire the attractiveness of the brilliant and colourful tidbits and, having had an illusion of variety, fill up on rice with complete satisfaction.

Nor was it only my companions of whom this was true. On the boat from Omori to Hakodate, the menu had listed innumerable dishes. There was, however, nothing actually to eat but a cold vegetable "salad" and a grisly slice of meat. I had assumed that this was merely bad management; that they had not ordered enough and so had run out of the other things. I discovered my error about this at Noboribetsu, when Tama and Chiyo and I went into a *modan* restaurant for lunch. The waitress gave us a menu, printed both in Japanese and Japanese-English, which listed all sorts of good things. While we read it, she recommended the roast pork luncheon, which both Tama and Chiyo ordered at once. I did not want roast pork and ordered chicken salad. The waitress departed. There elapsed a half-hour. She returned to report that the chicken salad was not ready and the roast pork was excellent. I still did not want roast pork and ordered a beef sandwich and salad. We waited now for a full hour. At last the waitress returned, bringing our lunches. They were all the same—a slice of roast pork and a mound of rice.

Although it is rude in Japan ever to explain anything, Chiyo was sufficiently British so that I could annoy her into explaining this mystery. Obviously, she said, the restaurant had no meat but roast pork. The rest of the menu was pure decoration. A Japanese understood this at once. But since I had been so persistent they had had to order the other things for me because it would have been impolite to refuse. The waitress, in turn, could not admit that they did not have what I ordered because that would have been both impolite and a loss of face. They all knew that, if we waited long enough, I would accept the pork. In the meanwhile, time was no object. This was a recognized custom in Japan. The menu gave



an illusion of variety. The waitress told the customer what the restaurant actually had.

In Tokyo, Nobu had told me that dining was an art; that food was not important; that what mattered in eating was that the traditions were observed. I saw now that his assertions were rooted in genuine and basic customs. Moreover, these customs could not be easily changed, even when the means to change them were at hand. It was not the custom for inns to serve a noontime meal. Usually we dropped into some village restaurant or some farmhouse. But if we were off on some expedition, such as climbing the local mountain, the inn would supply a pocket-lunch to take with us, tied up in a decorative cotton handkerchief. This lunch was always a marvelously round ball of cold rice with a scarlet bitter plum buried in its heart. Since I did not especially like cold rice for lunch—even less after a five-hour climb up a glacial mountain—I frequently tried to get something else. It could not be done. A ball of cold rice was *shukan*. On one occasion a minor miracle happened, and we found bread and butter and ham served in the same inn. This gave me the idea that I might have ham sandwiches for lunch the next day. But although I explained to the little waitress, and although Chiyo explained, and Tama explained, and the little waitress understood, with every genuflection in her repertory, the next day when I left the inn, she gave me my lunch, and it was a ball of cold rice. From the Japanese point of view only an American could expect anything for lunch so uncouth as a ham sandwich. Through generations of conditioning, their own diet has become the most satisfactory diet for them, and their decorative details are as satisfying to them as our variety of food is to us.

## 7

Only Chiyo seemed to find the Japanese menu intolerable. She continued grimly to prepare breakfast; and at the larger stations where we had time, she would dash off the train in a search for bread and butter and fruit. Frequently, she was not successful, since bread and butter are not *shukan* and only the most important shops in the important places stocked them. By persistence, however, she

managed to keep her larder intact. Her eccentricity was everywhere explained by the presence of the foreigner, an explanation which our hostesses always accepted graciously, for foreigners are notably eccentric.

Of my companions, only Chiyo did not enjoy our journey. Little Haru and Tama, fragile and immaculate in light silk kimono, adjusted to everything, giggling and trotting on their colourful clogs, fresh as sparrows whether it was six in the morning at the beginning of a terrible thirteen-hour day of travel, or seven in the evening at its close. The gentlemen took everything calmly as befitted males. Haru left us after the first week, and the gentlemen on the next-to-the-last day, since they had to catch up their extra distance south of Tokyo. For them the tour had been entirely successful.

Chiyo, however, became with each day increasingly irritable. She refused on trains ever to sit with me, as she refused ever to accompany me anywhere alone. When we went in a group for some walk in the country and stopped to chat with some farmer, or small shopkeeper, or group of tourists, although she would translate the "polite" questions back and forth, she resolutely refused ever to carry a conversation further, and would not ask any of the questions I would suggest on wages, and crops, or Manchuria or the crisis. At first, I thought that all this was due to some personal feeling about me, but as time went on, I realized that she was painfully insecure about almost every aspect of our journey. It was not only that the whole slow-motion ritual etiquette bored and irritated her, but she was, beyond that, really ignorant of the polite forms, and this ignorance seemed to put her on the defensive so that she was tense, and, I finally saw, unhappy.

How unhappy, however, I did not realize until, our circuit completed, we were back again in Hakodate, where we spent a night and a day before our last leg back to Tokyo.

Like most of my discoveries about Japan and the Japanese, it came about unexpectedly when I was thinking of something else. I had spent the day alone in a library (looking up records of the Americans and English who had been the first real explorers of Hokkaido, at the end of the nineteenth century), and on the way back to the hotel had a mild adventure. I had lost my way and

was wandering vaguely about in the rain looking for the trolley stop, when a young man noticed my behaviour and paused to ask the trouble. He spoke no English, but he stood half under my umbrella—with the rain trickling down his neck—and listened patiently until I, with my odd Japanese, managed to explain where I was staying. Then he walked me around a dozen corners to the trolley stop—insisted on waiting till the trolley came—put me on, explaining to the condutor where I wished to go. The conductor in turn on reaching my corner, not only helped me from the trolley, but walked me across the street, and pointed out my hotel so that I could not possibly go off in the wrong direction.

This courtesy seemed so admirable, so friendly, so altogether delightful, that I reached the hotel in a glowing mood, and finding Chiyo alone in our room, burst out in a pæan of praise for the friendliness and patience of the Japanese—recalling that all over Hokkaido, everywhere, in trains, on buses, and at the hotels, men had come up to chat with me, to ask me questions about what I had seen in Hokkaido, and what I expected to find there—conventional questions, I said, yet showing a desire to be friendly that was very warming.

At this Chiyo broke out with some emotion. "They thought you were a spy!" she said.

"Thought I was a spy!" My first emotion was alarm, my second annoyance, my third amusement. Obviously, the young man and the trolley conductor had not thought me a spy.

"They thought you were a spy," Chiyo repeated, her face cold with anger. "And they thought I was your interpreter. And everywhere I have been questioned about you and badgered. And you thought it was merely friendly curiosity. Most of those men in trains who questioned you were police agents."

Chiyo was silent for a moment, and then broke out again, "There was first that man on the train from Hakodate to Sapporo. You described him to me afterward and said he looked so amusing with his alpaca coat, his straw hat and his fan. He was a detective. You did not know why Mr. Naka and Mr. Mura avoided talk with you after the air-defence manœuvres. It was because a detective warned them not to talk politics with a foreigner."

I thought hard. This, of course, explained many things. If it were true, or even if Chiyo only believed it to be true, it would account for her avoidance of me, that had so puzzled and hurt me. I said, "Then why did you stay with us?"

"It is worse when I am alone!" Chiyo was silent for a moment and then burst out, "I am a foreigner in my own country."

The barriers were down at last, and Chiyo could not get them up again. She talked as though she had been bottled up to the point of explosion, and unwittingly I had given the final jolt too many.

Chiyo was born in Tokyo in 1892. Tokyo in that year was a city in hysterics. The affectation of Western culture, among the government officials and the wealthy classes, had gone to strange extremes. The Court had adopted Western formal clothes as its required ceremonial dress; no wealthy Japanese home was without at least one Westernized room, hideous with golden oak or mission chairs and tables; society danced Western waltzes gracelessly; and, on the streets, top hats were worn with kimono. New-fangled horse cars were causing strikes among the rickshaw pullers; Western institutions were replacing Japanese; and the feeling of pro-West versus anti-West led to riots and assassinations.

Chiyo's father, shrewd and competent, was in the vanguard of the pro-West Japanese. Of the samurai class in the old regime (which collapsed just twenty-one years before) he had held an administrative post in his clan, and so had had experience with money affairs. Under the feudal system, tradesmen and money-lenders were at the bottom of the social scale, with neither social nor legal rights; but this samurai (like many of his fellows), when his class was abolished by edict in 1871, was shrewd enough to see that in his new world it would be precisely those formerly despised classes who would be in the position of power. He became a merchant, trading with the barbarians from overseas—and was successful at once. But, despite the assistance and favour of the government, these champions of a new age were in a dangerous position. The majority of their countrymen were not won over to the new way—the foreigners were feared and hated, and those declassed samurai, who had not the

shrewdness or desire to meet the West on its own ground, bitterly resented their countrymen who had more adaptability.

Chiyo's mother decided that this Tokyo was unattractive and dangerous. During these times of change and uncertainty, it was better that the wife and small daughter go abroad. The father and the mother's aristocratic family agreed. If the Western ways were to prevail in Japan (and who could doubt that they would?), a daughter educated abroad would be an asset who might make a distinguished marriage among the increasingly important bureaucracy. When Chiyo was three, her mother took her away to England.

When she was eight years old, her mother returned to Japan, and small Chiyo, grave and dark with long pigtailed and a horrible shyness, was left in a private school for girls. Chiyo's face, even today, was distorted by that old hurt of parting. She was deserted, left alone among these alien folk, unwanted by her mother, unwanted anywhere. She had protested, passionately but unavailingly, and since her mother, obedient to her own precepts, showed no emotion, Chiyo had thought she felt none.

"It is better that you have an English education," the mother had said. "The world is changing—Japan will change with it. You will be prepared for the new life."

Her mother's parting gift was a small, steel dagger, marvellously engraved, an heirloom. "Remember," her mother had told her, "it is better to die honourably than to live dishonoured. A Japanese controls himself. He accepts what comes with strength of character. He does not yield to emotion. He learns all that he can from these foreigners, but he does not yield himself. Do not trust them. Learn from them. Stay secure in your heritage as a Japanese."

Life for a little Japanese girl in an English private school was a bitter experience. The girls who were friendly were too friendly, with a breathy, gushing friendliness that emphasized her difference from them even more than the others' neglect or persecution. She could not be simply one of them, and yet she was living as an English girl, dressing like an English girl, learning to eat their food, acquiring their clipped accent, reading what they read, studying their lessons—becoming, almost, an English girl. Eventually, of

course, she made a few real friends who accepted her as a human being, not a curiosity. She became interested in her study. Conscious of her alienation from her own land, she felt that marriage was impossible for her. She would have a career. At sixteen, she was determined on college and social work. She was about to write to her family for permission to attend college, when she received a letter from her mother. "Come home," the letter read. "You have been educated enough. It is time that we arrange a suitable marriage for you."

Chiyo wrote and asked permission to stay. It was refused. Financially she might have remained without permission, for her father, as a gesture of complete Westernization, settled on her a small income, with which (and work of some sort) she could have managed. Yet Chiyo could not decide on this break with her family. Although the idea of marrying a man of her parents' choosing now seemed impossible to her, and although she still felt the bitterness of her mother's desertion, her emotions were tied to her family, and there was a desire to see her country and her people. She gave up the idea of a college education and sailed for Japan . . . for home.

But it was not home that she found. She learned almost at once that she was an alien. The Japanese ways were not her ways, in little or in large. She was uncomfortable and graceless in Japanese dress. Japanese customs seemed inconvenient and artificial. She did not know the etiquette, and, although her mother's friends were patient with her at first, her lack of seriousness in her attempts to master the correct formulæ, her constant lapses, annoyed them and kept her in a state of tension.

More serious, her mind had been awakened. She was accustomed, among her English friends, to read and discuss ideas, novels and human relations. She had known on a footing of comradeship the brothers of the school friends whom she visited at the holidays. Now she found herself cut off from social relations with men, and limited for companionship to girls with whom she had no ideas or interests in common. Her Japanese was rusty, and she could not read even the simple *katakana* that the small schoolchildren are supposed to learn, and the Chinese characters were as mysterious to

her as they would have been to any of her English friends.

The man whom her parents had selected as a husband, she met formally in the presence of their parents and the go-between. But fortunately for her there was a feeling on both sides that it would be wise to wait and see how she adjusted herself before the match was definitely contracted. This gave her a breathing spell . . . and may have saved her sanity, for she realized that she could not marry a Japanese man and live as a Japanese wife. Her talents would be of no use to a Japanese husband. A Japanese wife was a housekeeper and a mother—not a companion and hostess. Chiyo's Western ways were a handicap here in her homeland. To conform to this society, she would have to undo entirely all the work of the past thirteen years, and, even if she could do this, would she wish to?

This miserable period, which lasted for three years, was ended by an England that had followed her to Japan. She was sought out by a young *Chargé d'Affaires* of the British Embassy—a young man who was a friend of the family of one of her English schoolmates. A letter had urged that he look her up and be nice to her. Chiyo was nineteen and attractive. Exhilarated by finding herself again among familiar customs, familiar speech—a human being among others—not a puppet performing ceremonies which she did not understand and which bored her—she became radiant. The Embassy crowd took her up.

It was 1912. At that time an English-Japanese was a novelty, and in the person of this animated, lovely girl—who wore Western clothes with an air (not the usual, awkward dowdiness of a Japanese in foreign attire), who spoke English perfectly—was a new toy to be petted and made much of. Her parents were flattered by her popularity, and made no objections as she went the round of teas and receptions, dinners and balls. It was good for her merchant father, this foreign contact; and a daughter's job was to be useful. If she could not serve as the proper wife of a Japanese, as a go-between tying the two cultures she was excellent. As for her, she lost her head completely . . . she was part of two worlds, and her success in the foreign cancelled the sting of her failure in the other.

Inevitably, she and the young *Chargé d'Affaires* fell in love. He escorted her everywhere. Although there was no formal announce-

ment, between them it was understood, or at least so Chiyo thought, that some day they would become man and wife.

What happened then Chiyo only learned much later, after years of suffering and bitterness. There were whispers to the young man, warnings that a diplomat contracting marriage with a member of a coloured race would ruin his career. His arguments—her charm, her education, the high social position of her family, the denial that the Japanese were in any sense a coloured race—were brushed away by the English lady who was his mother, and by his superior in the Embassy who was also a family friend. Abruptly he received his transfer, back to an office in London. He left Japan at a moment's notice, with only a note for Chiyo. He would write.

After his departure Chiyo's life was unbearable. She could not face the foreign colony, for although she did not know the facts behind his departure she sensed that something was wrong. Her parents, resentful of this slight to their daughter, determined that she should become Japanese and accept the Japanese way. This Chiyo could not do. She saw no possibility of a satisfactory life in Japan. And although the letters she received from London were stiff and formal, she felt that if she could once more be with her lover everything would work out. She begged to be allowed to return to England. She met furious opposition. This time, however, she made her own decision. Her foreign education had given her a foundation for independence; now her frustrated love gave her the dynamic. She had money of her own. She fled back to England.

This was 1914. What would have happened between the two, had there been no war, is conjecture. Chiyo admitted that their reunion was not satisfactory. There were tensions between them, and finally quarrels. When he joined the Army and went to France the separation was almost a relief. There were letters that became intermittent. She saw him once more, briefly on leave, when he was too fatigued and shaken by the war to face the problem of their relationship. They quarrelled again, and she was left after he had gone in a deep inertia of frustration and despair.

She stayed on in England, supplementing her income when she needed extra money by dressmaking, for which she had the Japanese



talent. Her tastes were for books and museums, music and the theatre, and she led a quiet life, seeing a few friends, waiting, without knowing she was waiting, for his return.

He did not return. When the war was over at last, she heard, through a mutual friend, of his safety. But he did not seek her out, nor did he write, and when she finally heard of his marriage, it was hardly a shock—rather a relief in knowing positively that this life she had been living within herself was false; that she must, if she could, build something more solid and real. She returned to her studies; began to take courses and attend lectures; and it was at the London School of Economics that she met Dee.

Her father's death had brought her back to Japan. Her mother's letter announcing it had asked her to come home. That was in 1932. She had come with trepidation. A woman of forty—an English-woman, rather than a Japanese—bringing with her an English friend. How would Japan receive her this time? What had actually happened within her country she could not guess. She had heard of its activities only from the point of view of her English friends and acquaintances, who asked her bluntly if she approved the Japanese immorality of undercutting the markets of the Western nations; if she approved of Japanese aggressive activities against China. With the Manchurian Incident, her English friends were almost personally hostile, and it was bitter to have to accept the blame for a nation she felt had disowned her.

Despite her bitterness, however, she determined, this time, to make her peace with her own country. Her experience was shattering. She was astonished to find how thin was the veneer of Westernization. She had believed with her English friends that Japan's march toward modernity had been steadfast and widespread. Instead, she found her family and their friends—the vanguard of Westernization—living as they had in 1908. Rather more Japanese, in fact, with a definite prejudice against Westerners, and a reaching back to the "Japanese Way" in an effort to slough off many of the acquired Western manners. The people whom her family took her to visit were definitely hostile. More than ever, she was an alien—and now her ignorance of etiquette was not received with amusement—she was made the butt of a silky disparagement that was unbearable. She

was invited to laugh at the monster that was the expatriated Japanese, who did not know the custom. With a meticulous, formal courtesy that emphasized her awkwardness, she was made to feel a foreigner, a graceless un-Japanese interloper.

She had left her mother's house and was living alone, practically a solitary, working at her studies, doing a little translating. She had a few foreign friends; occasionally, she visited her mother, or saw her brother, Koki, who was an intellectual, and so more tolerant of her Western ways. But her sister-in-law, Tama, was a Japanese-Japanese, and, although they were friends, they had nothing in common. Moreover, she was persecuted by the police. In the upsurge of Nationalism following the Manchurian Incident, all Westerners and Westernized Japanese were suspects. Police stopped on the street to question her. Her home was raided when she was entertaining foreign friends, and the foreigners asked to leave. A woman living alone was an anomaly in Japan, and her "foreignness" was written all over her—in her clothes, her walk, her accent, her self-consciousness, her ignorance of custom. She could do nothing that was not at once investigated. There is little privacy in Japan at best; a "marked person" is a "marked person" indeed.

She had welcomed this trip to Hokkaido, thinking that, since touring was so harmless a Japanese occupation, and since Tama was so Japanese, she would for a time be free of the constant police badgering. But my presence in the party had made her a doubly suspicious character. Since it was not usual for foreigners to visit Hokkaido, it was thought by the police that I must have some sinister motive for doing so, and that I had employed Chiyo to assist my spying. I had unwittingly encouraged this suspicion by everywhere asking questions—including questions about crops and industries in Hokkaido, questions about wages, and even questions about political opinions. Only by refusing to translate many of such questions for me had Chiyo protected us both from serious trouble.

Alas Chiyo! What a dismal period to a holiday in Hokkaido! Had the world in its evolution actually reached the point when it was no longer possible to travel freely, and have free relations with people as individuals, rather than as members of some system? For

if Chiyo was a modern Madame Butterfly, her predicament went far deeper than the dilemma of Cho-Cho-San waiting for the return of her American naval officer. Chiyo was a woman deserted by her lover; but much more than that, she was a woman without a country. Expatriated, almost an exile in Japan; in England, she was a Japanese, a member of a "coloured race," who was tolerated up to a certain point, but who was never granted full equality. It was the constant prick of this basic humiliation of race that had turned Chiyo into an embittered, frustrated woman, whose warped personality made it impossible for her ever to work out a satisfactory life in either country. For her personality was obviously warped. She was not, actually, the complete outcast she felt herself to be. She had devoted English friends—Dee was one of them—who accepted her as completely as they accepted any other friend. She might, too, have made a better adjustment in Japan had she not constantly seen everything Japanese from the distorted point of view of English people who felt superior to Japan. The fact of her rejection as a Japanese, however, was too vividly bitter to admit into her vision the smallest evidence that would soften her picture of herself as a persecuted individual.

This was perhaps of no importance to anyone but Chiyo. If, however, the same frustration were working on a national scale; if Japan as a nation felt this same outraged pride and insecurity, then perhaps it was of importance to everyone, everywhere. While Chiyo was telling me her story, I found myself recurrently thinking of my one serious talk with Mr. Naka and Mr. Mura. The central core of their opinions—opinions that had been deliberately manufactured for them, and with which they had been indoctrinated by emotional harangues, over the radio, on the lecture platform, in the classroom—was the notion that the white races felt superior to the coloured races, could not be trusted to treat them honestly, and intended always to control them. Whether or not this was wholly true was not the point. The point was that it was *sufficiently* true, was sufficiently backed by actual historical events to give the necessary plausibility to a nationalistic propaganda, geared for an aggressive policy in international relations.

Listening to Chiyo's story, I felt anxiety, not only for her as an

individual, but for Japan as a nation, and for the peoples and nations everywhere throughout the world.

## 8

Our tour over, we came into the Tokyo station at seven in the morning. After Hokkaido, the atmosphere as we came off the train seemed stiflingly oppressive. It was raining. Nonetheless, there was an agreeable emotion of homecoming, combined with a sense of blessed release that I would not be awakened at four tomorrow in order to catch a bus. I exchanged *sayonara* with my companions and we all scattered in different directions into the grey drizzle.

Dee and Akiko met me beaming at the door. It was wonderful to be back, and as I stepped up into the hall, I remembered with astonishment how strange this house had been to me only two months before. Now it seemed simply home. We all talked at once, exchanging anecdotes. While we talked and I was secretly vowing that, for some time to come, I should remain quietly at home and confine my activities to meditative-sitting, Dee said she had wonderful news. While I was away she had taken a *besso* at Yuigahama Beach, Kamakura, for the rest of the summer. We were leaving at once!

"What's a *besso*?" I said coldly.

"A summer villa, of course," Dee began, then noticing my lack of ardour, went on to explain that no one stayed in Tokyo in summer, that really the humidity was unbearable, that our *besso* was close to the sea, that we could bathe.

I went upstairs plotting rebellion. I definitely wanted to go nowhere. I wanted to stay settled and digest Hokkaido. The thought of boarding a bus or a train sent shudders through me. My room seemed delightful, and I could close my panel behind me and be alone! Sharing a room for two weeks with two and three females was an experience one must recuperate from in solitude and quiet.

On my table was a stack of mail from home. I seized it eagerly, and then stood with it in my hand. Also on the table was a book, open, and a passage marked with Dee's bold hand. Beside the book was a small pile of newspaper clippings. Dee had put them there,

of course, and an inner voice said, "*En garde!*" I took them up and sat down in my wicker chair—the first chair I had seen in two weeks. I looked at the book. It was Terry's "Guide to Japan." The marked passage read:

The Tsuyu, or Little Heat, is a gloomy, muggy, lowering, sticky, rainy season which jangles delicate nerves and makes fat men peevish and profane. The humidity is more trying than the heat, and at this season, certain improperly balanced folks develop suicidal tendencies. . . . The Doyo, or Big Heat, occurs from July 20 to August 10. The rain now falls intermittently, and heavy storms of two or three days duration are features. About mid-September, come persistent downpours which last till mid-October.

The first clipping told of a current epidemic of sleeping-sickness. The second began:

You thought it was hot in Tokyo during the last two weeks? The Doyo, or hottest season, only begins today. It will continue to August 7, according to the old lunar calendar. Although this calendar is now outdated, there are many who stick to the idea that the next eighteen days will be the hottest of the summer and this in face of the fact that September is but little cooler than July, and August is too stifling to even think about.

An important day of the Doyo is the Day of the Ox. This is the day for eel-feasting. . . .

I looked around my familiar room and sighed. I knew that I was as good as on my way to Kamakura at this minute.

## VI

### LAND OF THE GODS

"The name of this land, Nippon (of which the corrupt pronunciation became Japan), is pronounced in our pure mother tongue *Hi-no-moto*, meaning the birthplace, cradle or source of the Sun."

"Land and man, according to Japanese mythology, are blood-brethren, born of the same divine parents."—*Chikuo Fujisawa*.

IN leaving Tokyo for Kamakura, we had merely left the stewpan for the stew. We arrived in the midst of a downpour that became wearily a drizzle, revived to a torrent, thinned to a blur—the air replaced by a liquid vapour in which creatures without gills seemed in danger of suffocation.

Our *besso*, a *modan*-style one-storey house of concrete and glass, was on a bluff directly above a beach that made a Coney Island for vacationing Japanese. It was one of a handful of such semi-Westernized villas, lost among the masses of Japanese homes—a few courtyard-enclosed mansions, endless crowding shacks. Kamakura is a summer resort, a fishing community, and a treasure-house of historical monuments. For us, however, it was also a watery prison, and now on the tenth day of submersion our household was demoralized: towels remained eternally damp; mould collected on our shoes and books; loathesome grey slugs crawled on the sand-stone terrace; the rain beat through the cracks in our glass doors, forming little pools on the floor, but failing to drown the fleas that lived in the layer of sand under the grass mats. Finally, there came a typhoon. The roofs of the pavilions on the beach below sailed over our heads and landed in our pine grove; our house shook and billowed as the wind roared over us.

Dee missed the worst of it by going five days a week to her Tokyo office. She spent the long week-end with us, but, being English, took the whole business quietly, reading, writing and going out to stride energetically along the beach through the yielding sand, seeing it through with poise and discipline. Akiko, being Japanese, was not aware that there was anything uncomfortable about our situation. However, I, being of the unstable temperament mentioned in Terry's Guidebook, and having caught cold during a water-logged expedition, gave way, at last, to hysteria.

The occasion was a mild misfortune that happened on the tenth day of storm. Dee was in town and Akiko and I alone, when, driven to action by cold and despair, I dashed out into the gale to collect some fragments fallen from our neighbour's roof to burn in our smoking fireplace so as to mitigate the damp and chill. Reaching for a board, I was stung on the foot by some creature unknown. Was it a scorpion? . . . Was it only a bee? . . . or a nettle? . . . or my imagination? I saw this last idea in Akiko's blank face as she brought me damp compresses and very tenderly placed them on the wrong foot, vastly puzzled by the fuss I was making. Even in my misery, I found time to wonder if Japanese nerves are as close to the surface as are the American's. Akiko's own ankles were a

horrible mass of open sores. Our *besso* was alive with sand fleas, which we brought in from the beach with our shoes, since we had not the wisdom to leave our shoes outside. These fleas were vicious. Dee and I protected ourselves with stockings and powders and the will not to scratch. Akiko, barefoot, scratched to her heart's content, and, if the pain of her sores caused her any distress, she gave not the slightest indication, and when I worried about her and wanted to send for a doctor, her amazement was profound.

Now, however, as I examined my smarting foot and listened to the typhoon, I thought less of Akiko's fleabites and more of the abominable Japanese climate. With my nerves torn by the long siege of chill and damp, of drizzle, downpour and drip, I remembered that recurrently, through her long history, Kamakura had been wiped clean by a tidal wave in the wake of a typhoon, and could only audibly hope that it would happen again.

"This climate!" I cried out. "Japan is a half world, not yet solidified from a vaporous state; we'll all suffocate!"

I said much more, in genuine despair, for time was going and I wanted to explore Kamakura and see the countryside; I wanted to swim in the sea just below with only a narrow beach between; I wanted to investigate the Japanese Coney Island that ran along the beach below; I wanted really to see the memorials and temples and shrines; I wanted to do anything but sit in this cold, damp house, listening to the breakers pound on the beach and tear at the brave, small pavilions. I winced and groaned aloud as a signboard landed with a crash on our terrace.

Akiko looked at me. She is a competent psychologist, or rather, since she is Japanese, perhaps it would be better to say that her intuitions are sound. She realized that when a foreigner gets into this sort of state of mind, he probably needs exercise. She announced that she would stop the rain. She slid over to the glass door, pressed her little nose against the pane, and began to sing in a flat monotone:

*Ame kon kon yan de kure  
Ashita no ban ni futte kure.*

"We *texi* now," she said to me with assurance. "That song, he tells the rain to stop dripping and come tomorrow evening instead."

It was a Japanese version of "Rain, rain, go away!" All men are brothers, and all work similar magic against unpredictable nature.

Akiko went on to explain about the rain song. When she was a little girl, she said, she took a doll and fastened it to the trunk of a tree. After the proper number of bows and clapping of hands, she sang the song, and then the doll was supposed to send the rain away. If the magic was successful, and the rain stopped, she took the doll and ceremoniously disrobed it and gave it a decent burial in a little pond.

"And if the magic was not successful?" I asked.

"Oh, then." She gave me a humorous, sidewise glance. "Oh, then, we threw it in the *benjo*."

We discussed a walk. Before we could reach a decision, however, our door was thrust open and the beaming face of Mr. Muro broke in on our gloom like a bursting sun.

The Muros were our neighbours, for their home was in the village of Katase, twenty minutes off by electric-train. He had already welcomed us here, popping in unexpectedly one morning at six to bring us a picture of an image that represented Dainichi Nyorai (the Ultimate Reality of the Universe) and a small cactus from his greenhouse. Now he bowed cheerfully, gave his dripping umbrella to Akiko, took off his soaking socks—he had left his shoes on the terrace—and came across to where I was stretched out in a deck chair. "I have come expressly to bring medicine for you," he said.

This remark was baffling in more ways than one. Mr. Muro's English resembled the French that American teachers teach in American schools. He could read English easily, and could talk fluently—too fluently, for whenever a word eluded him he did not hesitate, but merely inserted some "symbolic" word. "Medicine" was the word he used most often. It could mean practically anything—even, of course, medicine. Translating it kept me perpetually three ideas behind the main thread of his discourse. What it meant now I could not imagine. For with no way of knowing that I was ill, why should he bring me medicine?

Nevertheless, that was precisely what he had done. Beaming like a kewpie, he began triumphantly to bring out from the pockets of



his coat a whole pharmacopœia—bottles and small boxes, containing pills and powders of unspecified utility, along with salves for fleabites and athlete's foot; and tablets which, according to an English label on the bottle, were "to strengthen stomach and bowels while promoting brain action." Some powders, wrapped in little paper-packets, he had, he said, mixed expressly for me, from his own ingredients. "You must take at once so," and he illustrated the technique, swallowing first a white powder, then a black, with apparent ecstasy. Obediently, I followed his example, though whether the remedies were bicarbonate of soda and charcoal or powdered snake, I shall never know.

"Now," Mr. Muro said, "you do this medicine." He at once sat down cross-legged on the mats, assumed the posture that Nobu had introduced to me on my first afternoon, and commanded me to do likewise. I obeyed, thinking meanwhile of the fleas under the mats. "We will empty our minds," Mr. Muro admonished me. "We will think of nothing."

How useful, I thought, was this practice of meditative-sitting. It was the Japanese answer to every problem. And not a bad answer either, for looking at Mr. Muro's narrow eyes—that seemed eternally delighted—and trying to hold the pose without movement, I began to look at myself with less anguish and more amusement. After an interval, I realized that I had relaxed and in the process had forgotten my sting; and even resented somewhat less the fact that I was unable to breathe.

Finally Mr. Muro uncoiled and sprang to his feet, giving the effect of a jack-in-the-box. "Now," he said, "we will do this medicine." He began to walk slowly around the room, bending his knees and raising his feet high from the floor with each step, walking on the balls of his feet like a dancer, his arms and hands still in the position of meditation, his eyes unseeing, staring at nothing. I followed him, enjoying myself thoroughly. At last, it was finished. "You will do this every morning before breakfast," Mr. Muro admonished me. "For one hour you will sit, and walk, and think of nothing. It will be good medicine for you."

## 2

The next day the weather lifted and my cold moderated (I do not insist that Akiko's and Mr. Muro's magic were responsible for this), and I was able to consider some of the problems that Kamakura had already presented. Despite the rain, we had been surrounded by drama, for the Japanese seem literally to be semi-aquatic, and from time to time we had made rain-drenched sorties to watch their mysterious activities.

We had seen a Shinto festival when our neighbours, the fishermen from the near-by villages—naked except for loin-cloths, their brown bodies shiny from the rain—had launched upon the sea a devil-god, in the form of an octopus made of papier-mâché, in order to propitiate the sea-god and prevent a severe typhoon, always expected at this season. There had been an accompaniment of flutes and drums. And hundreds of spectators, wearing coloured high clogs and waving marvellous paper umbrellas, had wandered about, imperturbably picturesque as though the rain were an invention of their own to justify their love of extravagant design.

We had seen, too, various rites of the *Obon*, a Buddhist festival, when the dead return and must be propitiated so that they will return to the land of the shades and leave the living unmolested. During this festival, that lasted for three days, I had been especially struck by the spectacle of our neighbours dancing on the beach in the rain—dancing moreover an *Odori*, a Shinto folk dance of the sort we had seen in Tokyo, but here symbolizing the chasing of the demons who return to earth with the dead. These activities and more like them—for we could not leave the house without running into some sort of ritual magic—made me increasingly interested in the Japanese attitude toward religion. And this, of course, led to Shinto.

When, during one of my first weeks in Tokyo, I had asked Mr. Sato what was the most important thing in Japan, he had answered, "Shinto." I was interested, of course, to discover, if I could, what Shinto meant to the Japanese. This was no easy assignment, for Shinto seemed to mean so much that it seemed finally to mean

nothing at all. Sato had implied that the term embraced the entire Japanese civilization, yet it was obviously necessary to approach the problem with a somewhat less inclusive statement. The obvious approach, however, the statement that "Shinto is the Japanese national religion," did not get you very far either. Akiko had given me another lead when she had told me that she had been taught in school, as history, the legend that describes the descent of the Emperor from the Sun Goddess. That legend, of course, was Shinto. It was only part of Shinto, but it seemed a good place to begin. The difficulty was that it was almost impossible to believe that such mythology was taken seriously in a country considered a modern Great Power.

I had attempted to discuss the matter with Dee in Tokyo, but she had put me off with *mada mada*. I could not hope, she said, to understand mythological Japan until I had seen the countryside untouched by Westernization. I had expected to see this country in going to Hokkaido, but Hokkaido is not the "real" Japan. It is a frontier, an outpost, almost a foreign country where climate and landscape are as different as possible from the other islands, especially the southern portions. Now that we were in Kamakura, the country was all around us, and I was eager to see whether viewing un-Westernized Japan would, as Dee prophesied, make Shinto easier to understand. The first fair week-end, therefore, Dee suggested that we should go farther south along the coast to her favourite bit of country, and spend the night in an inn directly beside an Imperial Villa, where the Emperor himself often stayed. Mr. Sato, she said, would join us there on Sunday for a swim.

We decided this on a Friday evening, so that we could make an early Saturday start. It was only a two-hour journey, and nine in the morning found us getting off a bus in front of Hyama Inn. The *modan* world had vanished completely; we were in deep country. The narrow dirt road continued on, the sea on one side, and low hills on the other. Nothing else was in sight except the inn behind grey stone walls, and in the near distance a blur of roof in a forest of green, which, Dee said, was the Imperial Villa.

The inn was typically Japanese, and we were received like wandering royalty; were welcomed and settled in a room with all the formal

ritual that I now took for granted—the whole choreographic effect of a play being acted, so that we seemed, as always, to be doing a scene in a ballet that represented a group getting settled in an inn, rather than actual people really doing so. Our room projected out into the garden, and with its open walls gave the effect of a summer-house. It was empty except for a low table, a few cushions, an enormous wicker basket for our clothes; and, in the *tokonoma*, an arrangement of huge, brown-speckled orange lilies. This room and this spot represented a Japan that seemed never to have heard of any civilization but its own. And the civilization, as represented by this formal empty room, was a civilization that made life into almost an abstraction. The slow motion, ritualistic behaviour of our maids, that in a modern restaurant in Tokyo seemed merely tedious indifference, here represented a manner of life, disciplined to adjust itself to this lack of privacy and space, and yes, too, to this sultry air—heavy with moisture that muffled mind and body so that you drooped under its living weight, incapable of strenuous exertion, whether mental or physical. The human being in such a room was less a human being than at once actor and spectator of a formalized drama in which, like the Chinese theatre, every action was precise and symbolic, determined by tradition.

In time, however, we had performed all the necessary rites. We could go for a walk. The entire staff knelt in the hall to watch us put on our shoes and smile and bow *sayonara*. They continued to bow until we were through the gate.

The country was familiar to Dee and she chose a narrow road that curved away from the sea, and led through a small village where children rushed out in swarms to stare at us and make jokes about Dee's blond hair—and then on into the country. On both sides of the road were rice paddies which marched in terraces up the slopes of the little hills behind them. Everywhere people were working out-of-doors.

Almost at once I found myself coming under the spell of the country. I had expected it to be beautiful, but this landscape had a quality unlike anything I had ever seen anywhere before. It seemed unreal, a world of unnatural—that is, contrived—perfection, as though the whole landscape had been intentionally designed per-

haps for a stage set. The scale was miniature as though adapted to man, and there was nowhere the slightest jarring note, not the smallest disorder, nowhere anything unpicturesque.

The little hills were everywhere and the road curved to avoid them. The clumps of houses and the paddy-fields merely filled the hollows between, or marched in terraces up the slopes behind them. The houses had mud walls and roofs of thatch, so that they might have sprung from the earth as naturally as the rice. Their open fronts showed interiors, empty and carpeted with straw, that made a colour contrast now with the greet shoots rising in the paddies, but would, in the autumn, exactly echo it. The houses and fields seemed to have been arranged in relation to the little hills as though deliberately for effect, and the hills themselves—frothy with bamboo, scented with pine, and accented here and there with clumps of blue hydrangea or a cluster of orange lilies—seemed almost self-consciously theatrical, as the twisted small pines seemed to strike attitudes. It added to the unreality of the scene that, while the hills were miniature, the infrequent flowers were gigantic. The lilies were twice the size of the tiger lilies I knew at home, and the occasional hydrangea seemed as though forced in a hot-house. The atmosphere too suggested a hot-house—steaming and damp. Although it was not raining, a thin, grey mist covered the tops of the hills and spread a thin pale smoke over the landscape, blurring the colours into tones of strange—almost fantastic—loveliness.

In this setting, the people performing their homeliest chores gave an effect of theatrical ritual, not only because their costumes harmonized with the landscape, but because of a sort of stylization of movement. A group of women were transplanting rice sprouts; they wore tight-fitting, long, blue trousers, short kimonos with a coloured pattern on a white ground, the sleeves tied back with a harness of coloured cords, their sashes figured in red, yellow, green and blue, and their heads covered with volcano-shaped straw hats tied on with multicoloured cords. They performed their gruelling task as though it were some sort of dance festival—a step, then a bending over from the waist to thrust the stalk deep into the wet mud, again and again with a ceaseless, apparently effortless rhythm and meticulousness of movement that could delight the beholder,

of one sort as a kind of ballet, and a beholder of another sort as a wonderful example of labour-saving movement. Two men came toward us, walking the narrow dike between the rice paddies. Slung from a bamboo pole resting on their shoulders, they carried a white wooden bucket bound with bamboo that contained human excrement to fertilize the rice fields. The effect was of some significant ritual. We stopped to watch a group of farmers who were ploughing a paddy-field with a water buffalo that plunged through the deep, black mud, stumbling and tossing its great curved horns while a small boy at his head beat him with a bamboo pole and the man leaned on the plough. They were plastered with black mud almost up to their chins, and their legs were caked, yet they were so satisfying from a pictorial point of view it was hard to remember that they were not merely part of some pastoral pageant. Even their discarded raincoats lying beside the road, since they were cone-shaped and made of straw, seemed to have been placed there to make one more touch of effective local colour.

Dee now guided me off the road on to a narrow path that led between terraced rice paddies up into the woods behind. She had seen, she said, a *torii* the simple gate—one horizontal across two up-rights—that always means a shrine. I had, while walking, noticed any number of these, but had been too enthralled by the scene in general to bother about the particular. The *torii*, when we reached it, opened into a small cleared place in the deep woods. In the background was a small weatherbeaten wooden structure, with a shaggy thatch roof hung with hemp rope and the jagged white paper lighting (the *gohei*) that symbolize purification in Shinto ritual. Before the structure crouched two grey stone images of foxes. This was a Fox shrine, a sacred place where Inari, the Rice God, was worshipped. The Fox, which is also a creature with miraculous powers of evil, was originally only the messenger of the Rice God, but this distinction was gradually lost, so that today the Fox—the evil spirit that can bewitch the unwary—is also worshipped as the Rice God, one of the guardians of the harvest.

I stared at the images. Here was the Fox God about whom the government's Bureau of Education had asked of high-school students, "Do you believe that the Fox has the power to bewitch

you?" When I had been told by Dee in Tokyo that the government could ask such questions of students, I had been merely bewildered, as the presence of Fox shrines in the central city had baffled me. Here, however, with these tense evil-looking images crouching in this moss-damp place, with miles of fantastic country around me in every direction and the swarming rice paddies just below, the question no longer seemed incredible. For this Japan was obviously not living in a twentieth-century world in which such beliefs appear absurdities, and the Fox had meaning here as guardian of the rice harvest.

I looked now for Fox shrines and found them everywhere. Some were weatherbeaten structures like the first, others were merely unprotected images in the woods behind the paddies, others only a cave—the entrance hung with the symbols of purification to announce it a shrine. Numerous as were the Fox shrines, however, they were only one of all the many shrines which we came upon, and the protector of the rice was only one of the many things honoured. There were shrines that seemed merely to announce some special spot in the woods, some lovely view, or merely an ancient tree—all of them designated by the hemp rope and *gohei*, with sometimes a small building reached by a wandering path or a flight of stone steps. We found triangular-shaped stones, phallic symbols obviously, roped with *gohei* to bring fertility to the land, erected beside the rice fields, side by side with sunken tubs of night-soil. We found isolated images, whose character Dee could not identify, guarding little secret places in the wood.

The farther we wandered, the more the enchantment grew. Each turn of the road disclosed some new vista, some new arrangement of the same thatched cottages, rice paddy, hillside and shrines. The mist, that had shrouded everything when we set out, had been almost imperceptibly lifting and now it billowed softly around the pine trees on the tops of the hills. A faint illumination of sunlight sent thin gold streaks plunging down to the valley, where it stung to a brilliant green the newly transplanted rice standing six inches tall in the paddies. The brown road took on a tone of purple, and the water rising above the black mud became slimy opalescent. It was a setting invented for a dream, casting a spell, the sinister

enchantment of a fairy-tale. The evil Fox, that was also the Fox God, seemed the natural creature to populate these sacred groves.

We walked all day. When weary, we climbed the steps to a shrine where we could sit in the woods and look down across a panorama of country. At one such shrine we were joined for a moment by a group of men who had come together by bus from Tokyo—a club of factory workers on their yearly holiday, they told Dee. They were making a round of famous views and the shrine we had chosen to rest in was one of them. They all bowed in turn to the shrine structure; bowed in turn to the landscape; then went off down the path, and on to the next shrine. For lunch we had noodles and *mochi*—beanjelly covered with dough—which we bought in a small village from a roadside vendor and ate sitting on a square of matting beside the road.

In the late afternoon we came into a small village lively with a festival. Lanterns were dangling from bamboo staves set up beside the road and every small house and shop was hung with paper rosettes and Shinto purification symbols. There was the usual orchestra of young men pounding drums in a bamboo pavilion, and just as we arrived, the usual festival-procession was coming into the town—a group of young men carrying an *omikoshi*, followed by a troop of small boys. We sat down beside the road to watch the procession. Squatting beside us was a wrinkled farmer. His tight blue trousers encased him as though with a second skin. His feet were in cloven, earth-coloured socks which made his feet look like hooves—he might have almost been the goat-footed god, Pan.

Dee talked to him. What was the occasion of this festival? What was *Kami*, the god?

The *Kami*, he told us, was a local deity, a lion god. It lived in a small temple several *ri* distant. There was now an epidemic of some sickness among the babies, who cried fretfully all the time, and would not eat. So the people had declared a day of festival and had brought down the lion god and were taking him to visit each home where there was a sick child. The lion was power and strength. He would make the children well.

After the procession, as we walked on down the road with the drumming beating in our ears, we were aware that the farmer was



following us. As we turned to look back at him, he called out asking where we were going. Dee explained that we were staying at the Hyama Inn, that we had been walking all day, and were now looking for a path over the hills that would lead us back. He told us to follow him. He turned off the road, following the dikes between the rice paddies until he came to a narrow path that ascended the hill. Following this, he led us into the dooryard of a farmhouse where a woman was washing clothes. Our friend called out "Guests have come," and she, without a word, scurried ahead of us toward the house. Our host seated us on the edge of the narrow veranda outside the open living-room, and the woman soon reappeared carrying a tray on which were three thimble-sized cups and a pottery jar. Dropping on her knees, she welcomed us formally with courtesy bows, and then, sitting back on her heels, she offered refreshment, well-aged plum *sake*, a rich deep purple-red with a mellow aroma and flavour. She did not join us in our refreshments, nor did she utter a word. Peering around the edge of the door, a small child in a pink and red kimono stared at us silently. We rose at last, rested and refreshed, and expressed our thanks as ceremoniously as we could. Our host presented us a final gift, a branch with one rosy apricot dangling. Then he walked with us to the edge of his farmyard and pointed out the path, while his wife and the little girl stood in the doorway and bowed *sayonara*. "Come back again," he called after us as we went up into the hills.

## 3

Dee had been right in saying that a view of the country would make Shinto easier to understand. She had also been wrong. Thinking over the events of our walk the next day as we lounged in our room waiting for Sato, I tried to sort out in my mind some of the things I had learned. Shinto was a kind of nature-worship. So much seemed obvious, for the little weatherbeaten shrines had honoured some lovely landscapes, or some solitary tree, as well as the Fox that guarded the harvest. In Tokyo, however, the important Shinto shrines were such things as the Imperial Palace, the tombs of dead Emperors, and the Yasakuni Shrine, where the spirits of

soldiers killed in battle were worshipped. The connection between an Emperor God and a Fox God was far from clear, yet both of these were Shinto deities. Dee had put off my questions by telling me to keep them for Sato, since he was a more competent tutor than she.

When Sato came, however, our first thought was a swim, and we lost no time in getting into our bathing-suits and down to the beach. The sea was chalky green and an off-shore typhoon sent the waves rolling in in high breakers that felt hot to my hand. Sato plunged through them like a seal, but Dee and I were content to remain near shore. Even here we were battered and breathless, and soon stretched out on the sand with the spent waves breaking over us. Grinning, and sleek from the sea, Sato joined us. I told him he was half-fish.

"*Sa!* We Japanese feel a strong kinship with the sea." He looked at me seriously. "It is very important to us, of course. It gives us much of our livelihood." He said it with a sort of affection, as though the sea were a personality, as real as a human being, and as he said it, I suddenly remembered that, according to the mythology the Japanese call history, the Emperor is directly descended from the marriage of a daughter of a Sea God and a descendant of the Sun Goddess.

I raised myself on an elbow to stare in the direction of the Imperial Villa. It was separated from our crescent of beach only by the jagged mass of a small, rocky hill that went straight to the sea's edge and formed a barrier. How odd to remember that the living Emperor who might bathe in a beach like ours, so close beside us, was worshipped as a descendant of the Sun and the Sea.

Nevertheless, here in the country, as Dee had prophesied, the legends were easier to understand. The scene before us was lovely with the same strange, almost fantastic, beauty that had so moved me during our walk the day before, and on our own beach when the fishermen had launched their devil god. The moisture-heavy atmosphere dulled and blurred the colours of sand and rocks into unfamiliar tones, blurred the contours of the adjacent cliff so that it seemed soft and insubstantial. The green of the sea was opaque and chalky, and where the waves flattened out on the sand and curled

along the glittering beach, water and earth seemed to dissolve and become one. It was a setting in which a Wordsworth would certainly discern "Proteus rising from the sea," or Triton blowing his "wreathed horn."

Dee interrupted my thoughts by saying she had a story to tell us. Once, she said, she had come to this inn with some Japanese friends, and had come down to this beach to make some sketches. She had coloured chalks and was trying to capture the curious subtle tones of the sand and the rocky barrier cutting this beach off from that of the Emperor's Villa, when suddenly she had been surrounded by a troop of policemen who confiscated her sketches and hauled her off to the police station. Sketching so near the Sacred Residence was a serious offence, *lèse-majesté*, of course. Only the fact that she was English, had lived for some time in the country, and had influential Japanese friends who vouched for her innocence of evil intent, had saved her from a long prison sentence.

I sat up and stared at the rocky barrier, the poetry of mythological Japan vanquished by the prose of political Japan. For Dee had completed my thought that her story had interrupted. The difficulty with Japanese mythology was that it was offered as history to the Japanese children in school, to everyone who read the newspapers and magazines, or who listened to the lecturers at the "Colleges of Culture." This mythological Emperor, who represented the poetic marriage of the Sea and the Sun, happened also to be the Head of the State of a Great Power.

I told Sato of my confusion. I said that, while it was possible to appreciate the legends as poetry, it did not seem possible that such mythology could have any real meaning in a modern nation, and it was impossible to understand the government's emphasis upon it.

Sato turned on one elbow to face me. "It is true," he said, "that today our leaders are greatly over-doing it, but that does not mean that the legends are not of real importance. Shinto, our national religion, as you know means the Way of the Gods."

I interrupted, "But what gods? The deified Emperors, or the Fox?"

"Both," Sato said. "And many more—all our gods are related to each other and to us, and the Sun Goddess is the mother of all."

He looked at me and grinned. He said he knew it annoyed an American to receive explanations in terms of mythology. This was because Americans were accustomed to thinking in concrete terms, while the Japanese thought in terms of images and symbols. If I wanted to state it baldly, however, I could say that by referring to the Sun Goddess the Japanese was merely going back to his sources. I should forget the Great Power Japan for a moment, he said, and think of agricultural Japan. I should remember that in developing their civilization, the Japanese had had to adapt themselves to the facts of their environment. Some were sober facts, like the smothering climate that slowed down body and brain, the smallness of the islands, and the lack of arable land and national resources; but beyond such concrete facts was the equally important, if less tangible, fact of the strange, misted beauty of the countryside and surrounding sea that had caused the Japanese to fall in love with their islands, and to become nature-worshippers.

He sat up to gesture toward the sea and the hill that separated us from an Emperor God. I nodded to show I understood. And I did understand as long as I forgot the modern nation, for with this mysterious blurred scene before me, it was easy to remember the little shrines honouring some ancient tree, or some secret spot in the woods, and the group of factory workers who had come by bus from Tokyo to bow to a landscape. But Sato was going on.

He said the Japanese had become nature-worshippers, and also fatalists, for the islands had two aspects—there was the heavy, weighted serenity; and there was also sudden, frequent violence. There were earthquakes, tidal waves, typhoons of devastating ferocity. These must be accepted also. This land, so benign, and so unpredictable and malignant, was alive to the Japanese. They peopled it with living gods, evil spirits, deities of earth and air and water; and identified themselves with the most gracious and powerful. Shinto—the Way of the Gods—included the rites, rituals and habits that expressed the relationship of the people with their land and their gods. Its power lay in its very vagueness, its absence of conscious intellectual dogmas. It expressed feelings that were largely in the subconscious rather than the conscious mind, and so, because they were never examined, were never questioned.

The word *kami*, Sato went on, the word the Japanese use for "god," is applied indiscriminately to any thing or person, either honoured or feared. The Shinto *kami* were, therefore, extremely numerous. There were the Ancestral Deities—the gods that were the ancestors of the Sacred Isles, the gods that were the ancestors of the Imperial Family, the gods that were the ancestors of the people. Most of these were nature gods—the Sun and Sea had fathered the Emperor; and most of the tutelary deities of the people were the gods of their local landscape. Then there were the other nature gods, the deities and spirits—some friendly, some malign—of the rocks and waterfalls, the trees, the rain and the storm. In addition to these mythological ancestors and nature gods, there were the actual ancestors of the people, who were also worshipped with Shinto ceremonial. The rites of Shinto, Sato went on, were the rites of ancestor-worship and agriculture: ceremonies to purify against evil, either from the malicious dead or malicious deities; and rites to coerce or cajole the nature gods to insure fruitfulness of men and sea and land; rites of thanksgiving for good harvests.

Sato gestured toward the Imperial Villa. The Emperor, he said, was High Priest of Shinto—the worship of the nature gods that were responsible for the creation and preservation of life. And the Emperor was also one of these same nature gods, descendant of the Sun and the Sea. The national festivals at which the *Tenno* officiated in his role of High Priest were the nature festivals in which the ancestral deities were supplicated for plentiful harvests—of grain or fish or offspring; or the harvest festivals, thanks to the gods for a fruitful season. Fertility—of earth and sea and man—this was the core of Shinto; the national holidays were celebrations of the High Priest of Shinto in contact with the Imperial Ancestors, performing for the nation the same sort of rites that the people performed locally.

It was true, Sato went on, that the modern use of mythology in the schools and in the Cult of Emperor-worship was political in intention. Nevertheless, the political value was due precisely to the fact that the myths were still genuinely descriptive of the facts of agricultural Japan. There was even a certain justification for calling the myths "history," since in Japan civilization had been static and

uninterrupted, quite unlike the dynamic changing civilizations of Europe and America. In Japan, the Mythological Age had never been left behind. I would find, he said, that the Japanese farmer referred to Inari, the Rice God, as casually as an American farmer referred to a tractor, and with much the same practical intention. In his country, he said, the gods still replaced science, as the centre and core of life, for the farmer beating out his rice with a primitive wooden flail has more respect and need for co-operation from nature than has the man whose mechanical contrivances have succeeded, at least partly, in subduing nature's unpredictability. It was precisely because agriculture was still so important and primitive in Japan and because the ancient rites and customs were so deeply rooted that the same gods could be used today by ambitious or frightened leaders for their own or nationalistic aggressive ends. For there was today another kind of Shinto—a modern kind called "Pure Shinto"—which was merely a technique, used by the ruling cliques, to direct the instinctive feeling of the people for their land and gods and ancestors into channels of aggressive nationalism.

Sato gestured again toward the Imperial Villa. "The Westerner," he said, "should have less difficulty in understanding Pure Shinto, for it is pure politics and pure nationalism. It is the worship of the Emperor as the Head of the State. Its *kami* are not only the mythological ancestors of the Divine Emperor, not only the actual ancestors—the deified members of the Imperial Family from ancient times—but also certain national heroes, statesmen, great admirals and generals, soldiers killed in battle, and even animals who have served their country. The Sun Goddess," Sato continued, "plays a part in this Shinto also, a very important part, for she is the connecting link between Before-Perry and After-Perry Japan—she is the Sun, the creator and preserver of life; she is also the Divine Ancestress of the Head of our modern nation. Our goddess is the great source of our national strength, for because of the veneration felt by the people for the *Tenno* as High Priest and nature god, they will follow blindly wherever he seems to be leading them."

I was getting cold, and sitting up, I shoved back out of the reach of the sea, and pulled my bathing-wrap around my shoulders. The journey in Time on which Sato had just taken us was a long one,

back to the earliest stage of human civilization when man depended on ritual magic to protect him from the mysterious and unpredictable forces of nature. In such a world the American was lost. Of all the great nations, America alone had never had a mythological beginning. We were children of the industrial revolution—we had conquered a vast continent swiftly with the help of machines. We had never worshipped nature, we had conquered her. Our notions about life were practical. There had been great forests to clear; great plains to cross, vast prairies to plant with wheat and corn, vast deposits of oil and coal, iron and gold to dig out from the earth. There was not time or place for the nonsense of mythology. The nature gods worshipped by the pre-Christian Greeks and Romans, which were our only cultural contact with the mythological age of man, were interesting only to small groups of literary folk—they had no genuine place in American culture. Ceres, goddess of agriculture, used to appear in some rural courthouse mural, but to-day, she has been definitely displaced by the tractor. How then could an American understand Japan—a Great Power with aggressive mechanized armies overrunning a neighbouring country, competing in the markets of the world with the industrialized Western nations, but also a nation still living in the age of nature gods, with a nature god for its Head of State; a nation that taught this mythology in school and called it history.

America was wholly the product of the machine-age. Japan, however, was like a shaft thrust back through the ages to the beginning by some cosmic archæologist, in which each succeeding period was clearly exposed, with the different strata dovetailed and overlapping, and coloured everywhere by the mythological past that veined the whole like the flowing streams in a slab of marble. Mythological Japan was sensible as a civilization that had persisted, as though preserved under glass, from the earliest stage of human society, when man—not having science to help him—relied on the gods.

Sato swung up to sit beside me, folding his legs easily into the Buddha posture. "Japan is the Land of the Gods," he said, "and to-day some of our gods wear fedoras." He was silent for a moment and then he added, "We have in my country a genuine anachronism.

There is our mythological Japan, a deeply rooted agricultural civilization; and then, there is also a small concentrated twentieth-century mechanized civilization that is using mythological Japan for its own ends."

## 4

"The knowledge of the country's history is to be more generally given in order that the people may better comprehend and appreciate our unique national policy based upon the union of the Emperor and subjects."—Item on *Adjustment of Public Thought*, offered in the Japanese Diet in 1933 as a statement of the purpose behind the proposal to set up a Department of Social Affairs.

Living at Kamakura, with the small farms and fishing villages all around us, it was not easy to forget agricultural Shinto. Mythological Japan was also much in evidence as we wandered daily through the temples and shrines that honoured the nation's improbable heroes, statesmen, and gods. Of the modern nation, which could use such things politically, however, there was no trace. That is, there was no trace that I could recognize. Trying to understand Japan is like solving a jigsaw puzzle; the parts may be there plainly visible all about you, but they have no meaning until you see them in relation to the other parts.

It was Sato who called my attention to a celebration of political Shinto. A few weeks after our week-end at Hyama, he sent me a newspaper clipping on which he had scrawled the message that he thought I would find the event described interesting, and that he expected to come to Kamakura to report it, and if he did, he would try to run in to see us. I read the clipping with interest, and found that I had already seen it in my paper. It told an interesting little story, and announced a festival:

Households in Ayukawa Village To Eat *Mochi* [beanjelly candy covered with dough] For the First Time in 600 Years.

To offer apologies for an unkindly act committed by their ancestors six hundred years ago, the people of Ayukawa, a little village of Wakayama Prefecture, will offer *mochi* to the Kamakuragu Shrine, Kamakura, dedicated to the memory of Prince Morinaga, on August 19, when the 600th anniversary of the Prince's death will be celebrated.

Defeated in his battle against rebels, Prince Morinaga with a few retainers was obliged to hide, and on October 29, 1331, he passed through the village of Ayukawa. The Prince and his party were fatigued and hungry, having eaten nothing the whole day. At the houses of the



villagers, they asked for some food, but they were refused. The day was the festival of Inoko at the village, and the villagers made millet *mochi* and placed them on the door eaves. The Prince asked to have some of these *mochi*, but even that request was refused, as the villagers were afraid to give anything to strangers because of the disturbed state of things at that time.

It was soon after the departure of the hungry Prince and his retainers that the villagers learned that the person to whom they refused to give even a single piece of *mochi* was Prince Morinaga. Such a discourteous act toward an Imperial Prince was something the villagers could not think of. So, to atone for their wrong, they resolved not to make or eat *mochi* forever. Thus for more than 600 years, the village people never made *mochi* even on New Year's Day, while all the surrounding villages had consumed *mochi* on New Year's and other occasions of festivity.

The village of Ayukawa followed this custom ever since 1331, but the villagers finally decided to make *mochi* on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the death of Prince Morinaga and represent them to His memory to apologize for the discourtesy committed by their ancestors more than 600 years ago.

With the offering of their *mochi* to the Kamakuragu Shrine, the villagers of Ayukawa will have their first *mochi* since 1331. A rejoicing celebration will be held by the village on that day, all households making and eating *mochi* for the first time in six centuries, knowing that the disloyal act of their forefathers had been pardoned with the passage of 600 years and their strict observation of the resolution not to eat *mochi* during that period.

When I had seen this announcement in my own paper, I had read it with amusement, marvelling at the Japanese who could abstain, *en masse*, from beanjelly candy for six hundred years as punishment for an unintentional slight to an Imperial Prince. I should have attended the celebration, probably, for Akiko and I enjoyed the festivals that were a daily occurrence somewhere in the neighbourhood and visited as many as we could. That this should be important enough for a Tokyo newspaper to send a star reporter down to cover it, however, gave it seriousness that added mystery to the other pleasures. I took the clipping to Akiko and asked her for information about Prince Morinaga. She knew nothing except that since he was enshrined in a temple, he was obviously one of the Shinto gods. "*Shukan*," she said. "*Shinto kami*." That was all one needed to know. At my request, she made inquiries among our neighbours and tradesmen. No one knew more about this Prince.

When Dee came home, I showed her the clipping and asked for enlightenment. She told me that the festival was a demonstration of political Shinto. It was one of numerous such celebrations of the State Cult of Emperor-worship by which the government con-

stantly sought to instruct the people in history and culture; and to remind them that their religious leader was also the ruler of the country. She added that because of the crisis, the government was constantly finding excuses for new celebrations; and they had probably dug this Prince out of the history books as a peg for one of their patriotic demonstrations.

Although I had seen innumerable festivals of different sorts, I had not yet seen one of the official celebrations of the Emperor-Cult and Akiko and I decided not to miss this one.

We haunted it for three days. It was a wonderful spectacle! Not only did it have all the usual delights of such celebrations—the decorated booths for food and lucky charms, the story-tellers and similar sideshows, and the people themselves, eternally bowing and waving fans in a slow-motion pantomime—but it had also a constant succession of special entertainments of impressive theatrical perfection. There was dramatic music in honour of the Prince written by a famous composer and performed by the most famous Tokyo orchestra; there were exhibitions of *judo* (wrestling) by obese top-knotted professionals; exhibitions of *gekken*, a special sort of fencing that in Before-Perry Japan was a discipline for the samurai; there were exhibitions also of other ancient forms of wrestling and fencing that today could only be seen at some special celebration. There were exhibitions of Flower Arrangement by masters from Tokyo; and exhibitions of Tea Ceremony.

As spectacles, these entertainments could scarcely be surpassed on the professional stages of any country. The costumes were archaic, complex and dramatic. The music, a composition for voice and instrument and drum, was exciting and disturbing—depending as much on the formal precision of gesture as on tone and rhythm. The *gekken* and the other forms of fencing were elaborately stylized in costume and gestures, so that they suggested a ballet far more than a combat, and were, in fact, precisely like the ritualistic stylized dance-combats of the traditional Chinese theatre.

These entertainments, of course, represented a civilization that is in grave danger of total extinction in modern Japan. The purpose of showing them here was to revive the people's pride in their own culture as an antidote against spreading Westernization. In Before-

Perry Japan much of the formal ritualistic culture was the special province of privileged classes, and in modern Japan it is neglected as the ancient classes disappear and the wealthy turn toward Westernization. The government was attempting to preserve this culture by putting it into the universities and schools. *Gekkōen* was today a discipline for the university students; and little schoolgirls all over the country were being initiated into the mysteries of Flower Arrangement and Tea Ceremony.

The attempt to preserve the culture as pure spectacle was, of course, possible of realization. The attempts, however, to streamline certain of the mysteries, to adapt them to the modern world, and so popularize them, merely reduced them to absurdity. Akiko and I saw this only too clearly in an exhibition of Tea Ceremony in which we participated. In its original form, Tea is a Mystery. It involves the making, serving, and drinking of powdered tea, in a special and secret setting, using carefully chosen utensils, according to a punctilious ritual. Here, at this festival, it was performed by little schoolgirls—self-conscious, frightened, and inept; moreover, it was served in an open booth, furnished with Western-style benches and tables, to everyone who cared to try, whether they knew the ritual or not. The effect was merely to burlesque the slow-motion punctilious ritual of the original; and instead of preserving *Cha-no-yu*, this modernized version seemed actually to destroy it completely by making it seem an absurdity.

These entertainments, however, were only part of the festivities, for the festival was first of all a lesson in history and Emperor-worship. The unifying core of the celebration was the worship of the Prince as a member of the Imperial Family. It was to honour the Emperor that innumerable pilgrims—their affiliation designated by some bright-ribbon badge—came in chartered buses from distant parts of the country.

The shrine of the Prince was a cave in a little wood behind the main temple structure, and in this cave was the pile of pink-and-white *mochi* presented to the Prince's memory by the repentant villagers of Ayukawa. Akiko and I, paying our respects to this shrine in the wake of a group of pilgrims, heard the story of the Prince recounted by the Shinto priest who served as guide for the

pilgrims. That is, of course, Akiko heard the story and reported it to me.

Prince Morinaga was the son of an Emperor who had been deprived of his power by military dictators. The Prince had attempted to arouse the people against the usurping military power in an effort to restore the actual rule to the Emperor. The Emperor, however, misled by treacherous advisors, came to distrust his son and allowed him to be captured and imprisoned in this very cave. Before the treachery was discovered, the Prince was set upon by assassins, one of whom attacked him with a short sword. The Prince struggled bravely and succeeded in breaking off the blade of the sword with his teeth. This valour was unavailing, however, and he was overpowered and beheaded. This was in 1331. Although the place where his head was discovered was roped off and kept sacred, and the Prince buried nearby, this shameful treatment of an Imperial person was not properly atoned for until 1869. Then, after the military dictatorship that had ruled Japan for more than two centuries was overthrown and the Emperor, called Meiji, was "restored" to his rightful place as Head of the State, this temple was built by Imperial command as an apology to the assassinated Prince, and the Emperor Meiji, in person, visited this shrine to offer to the spirit of the Prince the apologies of the Imperial House.

This story, which seemed entirely satisfactory, not only to the pilgrims but also to Akiko, quite bewildered me, for not only did the supernatural detail of the Prince biting the sword-blade give the story the unreal quality that is a notable part of most of Japan's history; but also it seemed extraordinary that the Emperor Meiji, newly restored to the position of Head of State in a nation struggling with the problems that attended the "opening of the door," should have taken the time to apologize so publicly to a remote and not very important ancestor.

That this Prince was not unimportant to the Japanese, however, was clearly proved on the last day of the festival, when the Civil Government, the Military, and the Church united to do him honour. High officials in top hats and pin-striped trousers, and important officers of the Army and Navy in full-dress uniform, came down from Tokyo to assemble under a striped canopy on the terrace over-

looking the main courtyard—below them, on the stone steps and in the court, Shinto priests, in white robes and black lacquered hats and clogs, stood immobile, bearing on their outstretched hands symbolic objects, such as stuffed pheasants and rabbits; hundreds of thousands of spectators, absorbed and silent, swarmed everywhere, clinging to the grassy slopes and surrounding walls, and even in the trees; while banked around the court were hundreds of mummers in fantastic archaic costumes waiting for their turn in the celebration.

The officials gave speeches which summarized the history of the Prince, which said that the "Land of the Gods" was in a state of crisis, and that the people must be faithful to their ancient way, and follow their *Tenno* who was today leading them. Between speeches groups from the waiting mummers dashed to the centre of the court for a succession of performances—dramas in pantomime, ritualistic and symbolic dances with masks, simple folk dances, and comic acrobatics. All of them were traditional, as were the costumes, and some of the dances were said to have been performed regularly before the Imperial House ever since the mythological past, as the music—dissonant and intricately rhythmic—had been performed in the mythological age to entice the Sun Goddess.

At the end of the afternoon, the whole affair exploded in a procession that overflowed the town, augmented as it went along by battalions of little boys with pink and red towels wrapped around their bristly hair, by legions of paper-decorated bicycles, and by vast elaborately carved festival chariots drawn by white oxen, in which orchestras of young men made complex music.

As Akiko and I wandered home—with the procession boiling around us—I found myself marvelling at the whole affair. Surely this was an enormous amount of entertainment to be given free in honouring a Prince who had been dead for six hundred years, and whom the average citizen had never, up to this moment, heard of. For these three days of the best professional entertainment in the country had not cost the majority of the people there a single sen. Admission, of course, was free. There was no charge for any of the exhibitions, which were all given on open platforms. The pilgrims who viewed the Prince's shrine paid a few sen to do so; and most of the people who attended scattered a few sen in the money-box of

the main temple. This, however, was all—and even this not compulsory. Even the people from out-of-town need not have spent much. Food—noodles, cold rice balls, beanjelly—was cheap. They could sleep, without cost—or for a small present—on the temple mats. Even transportation was trifling, since most of the people came in groups in chartered buses, and for those who used the railways the government on such occasions makes very cheap excursion rates.

Thinking of all this, I was inevitably reminded of the formula by which the dictators of ancient Rome secured the allegiance of their people—bread and circuses. The Japanese people seemed to be able to exist on the minimum of bread, but certainly their circuses were extremely numerous and very grand. This particular circus had taught the Japanese something of his country's history; aroused his interest in the ancient culture of his vanishing civilization; built up his pride in his national heritage. It reminded him that his nation was the "Land of the Gods"—ruled by a member of an Imperial Family that had reigned in an unbroken line since the beginning of time—an Imperial Family so venerated that for six hundred years a whole village would punish itself for even an unintentional slight to one of its minor members.

More than all this, however, as Sato pointed out when he dropped in later, this festival taught a political lesson; it stated that, although at one time the Emperor had been overruled by a military dictatorship, today he was ruling in person. The devotion of the people for their Emperor as High-Priest of their national religion is so great that all laws announced in his name have the force of divine decrees. The Emperor must seem to be actually ruling. Therefore, in modern Japan, although the decisions are made behind the scenes by the leaders of various ruling cliques (the Army, Navy and big industrialists), the decision, once made, is announced by the Emperor. Today the various cliques, fearful of an impending international crisis, were at odds with each other on policy. It was, therefore, necessary as never before that the people should remain calm and continue to be loyal to their ancient customs and duties. To assure this stability, all the opposing cliques presented a united front in these incessant festivals of Emperor-worship, telling the people

insistently that the gods would always guard their Sacred Land, that the divine *Tenno* was leading them, that they should continue to obey the ancient customs, continue to give all their wealth to the State, in confidence that whatever was decided by the government was the wisest decision possible, because it was the decision of the Emperor.

This was the "Theory of the State" taught in the schools; taught to the recruits in the Army; told incessantly over the radio and on lecture platforms by government officials and army officers who toured the country; and the people accepted it as people everywhere accept anything they hear often enough.

## 5

The lesson of Prince Morinaga was that Shinto is important not only inside Japan but to the world at large, since it is the central core of national stability for a Great Power. How important Shinto was in the modern world outside Japan I did not realize until later when it was dramatized for me—curiously enough—at a festival of the Nichiren Sect of Buddhism.

Japanese Buddhism, I had learned, has little in common with Buddhism as it is elsewhere. When I first saw a Shinto folk dance being used as part of a Buddhist festival, I was bewildered. Inquiring about this, however, I was told that the Japanese genius consists in an ability to take foreign institutions, accepting and adapting whatever is most useful to the Japanese civilization. Buddhism had been so thoroughly amalgamated with Shinto that today for the vast majority of adherents the two were indistinguishable.

In the early autumn, the Muros took me to the annual festival of the Nichiren Sect at its most important temple at Katase, not far from Kamakura. It was, in atmosphere and feeling, entirely unlike any other festival I had seen. I was familiar by now with the characteristic sign of Nichiren—the syncopated tomtom beat of the small wooden drums which the pilgrims carry, shoulder-high, and pound ceaselessly to the monotonous, obsessive rhythm of their chant, "*Namu myoho renge kyo*" (Glory to the Sutra of the Lotus of God). This chanting and drumming is one of the strange over-

tones of Japan, but hearing it in the city, or even in the distance in the country, is a very different experience from hearing it in the midst of the frenzy of festival.

The beat is a syncopated sound suggesting voodoo and primitive magic. The pilgrims march in groups, shrouded in white robes, pounding, chanting—their eyes fixed and staring as though under hypnosis; for the most part old people, or people who look old, with wrinkled faces like strange saurian creatures from some underwater world. They had come, many of them, from distant villages, and they sleep stretched out on the mats of the temple floor, and eventually, still drumming, will march back to their village, blind with the god.

At night the excitement swells until the atmosphere seems to throb like a high-tension wire. The steep flight of stone steps that leads up to the temple is lighted by flares, and massed with spectators—fishermen, farmers, small shopkeepers from the neighbouring villages. Mutilated lepers crouch among them, extending stumps of arms and legs, crying for charity—for this temple at festival time is a special sanctuary for lepers. Overhead the dark branches of the giant trees interlock in a deep gloom. In a moment of dead silence, the cicadas' shrill notes seem a thin echo of the lotus chant. The spectators, in a tense silence, watch the procession of pilgrims who come in waves, mounting the steps between the masses of people, pounding their drums. In between the groups of pilgrims come throngs of fisherboys, half-naked, whirling great canopies, called *mando*, clapping, leaping, and uttering occasional harsh cries. The *mando* is a large, loosely slung, umbrella-shaped canopy of bamboo slung from a six-foot pole. It is decorated with rosettes and streamers of paper, *gohei*, hemp, ribbon, and dangling lanterns, and crowned with a spire of silver or gold. The young men carry it for miles, whirling, twisting, leaping and lunging until the silver flashes in the lanterns' rays and the long streamers writhe in fantastic movements like living serpents, and the glittering, whirling *mando* seems alive in their hands as if it were, in fact, a god controlling the young men, rather than being controlled by them.

Watching this scene, the Shinto rituals, so picturesque and even sensible as part of a simple, agricultural civilization, became sud-



denly sinister. What was happening inside of these dream-walkers, pounding their drums, I did not know. What I did know was that the combination of the sultry air, the massed thousands, the frantic, steady beating of those obsessive drums, the monotonous chants, the writhing young men with their glittering *mando*, the undercurrent of insect noises—all this made up a whole that possessed the crowd and caused a release of tension that welded the entire mass into some sort of organism. These people, pilgrims and spectators alike, were unaware of themselves, caught up in some explosion, some concentrated absorption, free of self-consciousness or self-examination.

This festival and these rituals were different from the innumerable others I had seen. Yet, thinking now of the monotonous unceasing dancing circles, remembering the insistent mass genuflections before some temple or shrine, it occurred to me that what they all had in common was a kind of self-hypnosis by communal repetition of some simple well-known formula, the process destroying personality and welding the worshippers together into an unthinking mass of blind faith. Perhaps it was because I knew that this sect had been of great political importance in modern Japan and that its fanatic followers were at the forefront of a frenzied nationalism which had broken out in deeds of violence, that a new importance of Shinto occurred to me.

For watching these chanting, drumming pilgrims, it was impossible not to think of modern Germany, with the Nazis at their great spectacular rallies, saluting in a frantic rhythm to the repeated chant of *Sieg Heil*, or *Heil Hitler*. These obsessive rituals for inducing mass hypnosis were being used to create a fanatic loyalty to a mystic leader, and beyond that, a fanatic nationalism. "*Ein Führer, ein Vaterland, ein Volk*"—the three bound together in this hypnotic surrender that destroyed the individual *as an individual*, and left only "*Ein Volk*"—concentrated in a frenzy of wild nationalism.

This was Pure Shinto—a pathological nationalism, deliberately whipped up by leaders by the use of slogans and rites—based on the notion of the mystic union of leader and land and people. There was, however, this difference between Japanese and European Shinto. In Germany, and in Italy—where the same sort of ritual

practice prevailed—the slogans and rites had to be consciously and deliberately invented by the propaganda bureaus. The practices, therefore, were artificial, not deep-rooted, and might at any time be cancelled by a return to rationalistic common-sense, or self-consciousness, or the sting of defeat. In Japan such rituals had been common practice for hundreds of years. They were still meaningful as part of a body of folk practices that had never been left behind. The twentieth-century rationalism had never touched this Japan, had not touched most of Japan, and practices that were anachronistic in Europe were here merely a normal part of the ancient way. Those observers who said that modern Japan was copying her totalitarian techniques from the Nazis were vastly mistaken. There was no need for Japan to mimic Germany, either in techniques for arousing mass patriotism or for controlling their people and holding them close to the national line. All that the Japanese leaders had to do was to use the institutions and customs that had prevailed in Japan since time immemorial. And to weld this complex of religious, agricultural and communal rites and habits and emotions into an aggressive nationalism, all that was necessary was to identify the powers of evil with certain cliques of their own people and with some foreign enemy. And since the whole complex of Divine Leader, Divine Land, and Divine People was, in Japan, genuinely rooted in daily customs, it gave the Japanese a national power and drive that seemed fantastic when compared with their actual energy and strength.

## 6

While I was learning about the gods at political and orgiastic festivals, Akiko and I were also learning about the day-by-day life of our neighbours in its less dramatic moments. I had got interested in the fishermen on the day we saw them launch their devil god to quiet a tempestuous sea, and I had suggested to Akiko that we visit them and try to find out just how seriously they took their mythology and how they lived in between festivals. Their villages lay all around us, and almost daily for weeks we made an expedition to some one of them, watching the work and talking to the people.

At first, we were not always received with friendliness, for

foreigners were a rare sight in these small villages, and it was not unlikely that I was the first one many of these people had ever seen. Then, too, Akiko always wore Western clothes when she expected to interpret for me—since asking questions was a very un-Japanese occupation—and the people were suspicious of this foreign-looking Japanese on intimate terms with a foreigner. The young men, working on the beach, called out bawdy remarks, the children pursued, calling Akiko an *eta* (an outcast), a term of contempt, and the older women were silent and disapproving. We persisted, however, and thanks to my camera soon made our peace. Everyone was delighted to be photographed, and even when the prints were not good they accepted my desire to record the scene as a friendly gesture. I took pictures of all I could, and when we returned to distribute the prints, we had the entire village about us, looking and laughing and making jokes with perfect camaraderie. In time, we could wander where we wished, look at everything and even ask questions.

Our favourite village was called Kozubo. Like most of the other villages, it was a mass of minute houses clinging to a little hill that enclosed a shallow crescent of beach; and like our Tokyo neighbourhood, it combined the utmost picturesqueness with the utmost crowding and poverty.

We liked to arrive when the fishing fleets came in, for then, rain or shine, the entire population assembled on the shore to watch the spectacle. The boats came in singly, or a few at a time, and the landing was a communal affair—women as well as men helped to work the primitive pulley by which the boats were hauled up from the sea. The crowd stood back respectfully while the owner of each boat advanced to welcome it. One of these gentlemen always wore a bright blue velvet jacket and foreign-style straw hat—a conspicuous figure in a crowd where the general costume for the males was a loin-cloth and tattooing. He was followed by the wives of the fishermen—their cotton kimonos tied up above bare legs—who, with their babies on their backs, crowded around to collect the belongings of their husbands—the wooden box that held his pipe and tobacco, the empty bait box, a fish in a small hand-net. After these preliminaries, the fish were tossed out on the sand in a writhing, glittering pile and left there until everyone had viewed the sight,

admiring the colours, estimating the catch. Then they were washed in the sea and packed in tubs of seawater and ice.

The life of the village was on the beach. Here were the women eternally raking out mounds of small fish or piles of seaweed to be dried for fertilizer; here the red nets were spread out on the black sand, while an ancient gentleman made repairs, holding the cords with a flexed toe, working with a wooden spindle; in a shallow stream that coiled across the beach from the hills behind, the children fished for bait; and on the sand stood the gigantic woven baskets that, anchored in the sea, made pots for crabs or lobsters.

The sea life was in the build of these people. The young men were taller than usual in the city, with brawny shoulders; the middle-aged were lean and swift-moving; there were few old men in the crowds in a country where the old are conspicuous in every gathering, and their absence suggested the hazards of fishing life. The women were solid, with round faces. There was no elegance here, no ritualistic etiquette. They worked with their men, moving freely on bare feet, but they would pause for a moment to grin broadly into the camera. The children too had little in common with the decorative small dolls we saw at the Tokyo festivals. They were stocky with heavy faces and coarse features, dressed in simple faded cotton dresses, or cotton kimonos covered with soiled aprons; their hair almost invariably bobbed short with bangs across the forehead. And hardly a little girl but had a smaller sister on her back.

We followed the fishermen home, squatted in the narrow alleys, and chatted while the women cleaned the fish and the men folded up beside the charcoal brazier with bowls of cold rice or noodles. Akiko, in time, brought herself to ask impertinent questions about their earnings and religion, to which they finally gave answers enough for a portrait of village life.

There were five hundred small houses packed into the space of surely not more than a quarter-mile square; and fishing supported the entire community. Besides the fishermen's homes, there was a barber shop and a few small grocery stores that sold such things as soybean sauce and *sake*. There was a splendid new bathhouse decorated with fish, done in tiles; a large temple in honour of what sect no one we asked could say; a small schoolhouse with the village

radio provided by the government and used for propaganda. Most of the houses had a solitary electric-light bulb, but there was no running water, except from streams and springs. There were no lawyers or doctors, of course, but there was a witch-woman who was consulted about illness and bad luck. In the two feet of earth that made a little dooryard for one of the better houses was a large pointed stone enclosed in a bamboo fence. It was not, as we had supposed, a shrine. It was a guarantee against evil. The witch had prophesied that the head of that house was to be lost at sea. He would be saved only if the family bought from the witch a certain stone, which she would procure and set up with certain rites which she would perform. The family had followed directions, and here was the stone, and the fisherman still survived.

Kozubo was a prosperous village. One could tell from the fact that the largest boats were motor driven (the sails being purely auxiliary), for motors on private boats are the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, the men ate rice, and rice is a luxury. In the village about a hundred families owned boats. The owners employed the members of their own family and hired others as helpers—usually five men to a boat, with the women and children helping on shore. Ten yen to twenty yen a day was the average yield of a catch, which divided equally (among five) worked out at two to four yen apiece; but, although we could not learn the precise distribution, it was obvious that the owner would retain more than one-fifth. At the best then, two to four yen a day, when the sea was kind, for an average family of five-plus. But the boats did not go out every day, and the fishing year is cut short by the cold of mid-winter and by storms; and typhoons not infrequently march off with the boats and smash flat the little paper houses.

I had long since stopped translating Japanese money into its American equivalent, except for my own expenses, since such comparisons were really meaningless. The yen was thirty-three cents, but that was of no importance to these people, nor did it indicate their standard of living relative to Americans. There was simply no basis for comparison in money terms. It was too different. The yen was the Japanese dollar, and one sen was one-hundredth part of a yen. So if a family averaged 5 yen a week, that would

amount to \$5 for a Japanese, even though it was only \$1.65 in American money.

To learn as much as I have recorded took days of friendly visits and snapshots. Supplementing this information from the government reports, I found that the annual earnings of the average fisherman amounted to about 228 yen. This average fisherman was, of course, responsible for a family—wife and children, parents and perhaps younger brothers and sisters; also perhaps aunts and uncles. If there were one money-earner in a family of five, the annual income would work out at twelve sen a day per person; if there were two, the income might be as high as twenty-four sen a day per person. The whole family worked, of course, but as far as we could discover, only the fishermen who went out on the boats were paid, and the members of the family who worked on shore, helping to beach the boats, and repair the nets, were merely helping their fishermen. This income went almost entirely into rent and taxes.

The farmers of Japan, whose incomes are equally low, have subsidiary occupations (the raising of silkworms is the most important) to tide them over the winter. Such occupations for these fishermen seemed limited to the gathering and drying of seaweed, which is used for fertilizer, for soap, for food and probably innumerable other things. The stormy weather was spent mending the sails and the nets; and the occasional youth who showed a knack for turning out shell-animals or bits of carving from the bark of the near-by trees was the exception rather than the rule.

Certain social welfare organizations, stimulated by foreign missionaries, had attempted to develop co-operatives among them; but these had been almost completely unsuccessful. The same sources had attempted to interest them in handicrafts; to encourage them to plant nut trees on their hills; to keep animals and fowls. But the Japanese do not adopt new habits easily. Moreover, it is not a simple matter to keep animals where there is no land and nothing to feed them. The Japanese dinner table leaves no scraps, no waste of any sort—not enough to support a mouse, let alone a hog. The small gardens, clinging to the little, rocky hills, produced a few vegetables. Occasionally some of the younger men could take jobs in the village for the winter, but only rarely. They were men of the

sea and their life was there.

Getting at their religion was even more difficult. Here again it was not only Akiko's reluctance to ask questions, but the fact that it was hard to know what questions to ask. Neither these people nor Akiko were accustomed to discussing such matters, and now, when Akiko asked what *kami*, or god, was worshipped at their very splendid Buddhist temple, none of them knew. They worshipped there, of course, but they worshipped, they said, the national gods; and their petitions were for the usual things, safety for the fishermen at sea, for a son, for a good catch. The national gods to which they referred were also vaguely defined; but they spoke of *Tsuki Sama*, the Goddess Moon, with casual familiarity, and told us to be sure to visit the shrine on the top of the hill where the village *kami* were honoured. The word *kami* is used in Japan to refer to all honoured persons or spirits, real or imaginary, and it seemed, from what Akiko could learn, that the village *kami*, worshipped at the cliff's edge, included the spirits of the woods and surrounding fields, confused, somehow, with their ancestors who had lived for generations in this village; and behind that, the national gods, the Sun and Sea, who protect their lives, and were the ancestors of their living, divine Emperor. This, of course, was Shinto—the Way of the Gods—the national religion; a worship of the Sun as the giver of life; not only as the ancestress of the divine Emperor, but also as the Sun that presides over the seasons, that quells the storms, that makes the crops grow.

From an American's point of view such villages should not exist at all. What were the satisfactions of these people? There was obviously no "profit motive," since there was never an extra sen, and the earnings went into taxes and rent. Even the capitalists—the boat owners—had no more than their fellows except a velvet coat and an extra room in their small shack. Yet there it was—the young men posing with a brilliant fish; the villagers, day after day, admiring the catch; the devil god, *Taku*, launched with flutes and drum; the children, scabby and catarrhal, certainly, but still there, alive and grinning. . . .

Akiko and I bought six brilliant blue mackerel for thirty sen and carried them home for supper. Everyone we passed on the beach

stopped and admired them. "*Taihen ne!*" Where had we obtained them? The catch was good this evening!

Nearly home we encountered an ancient Japanese with a drooping straw hat and a short white cotton shirt above his squatting, bare legs, who was moodily poking about in a heap of seashells, and we paused to ask him what use was made of the drying seaweed that stretched in dark piles along the beach. He rose, bowing, and pleasantly explained that after it was dried it was pulverized and sprinkled on the rice fields as fertilizer. As he talked he lifted one foot, and standing like a stork, patiently scratched his ankle. Akiko, her face earnest with research, had assumed a similar attitude. Suddenly, I realized that I had imitated them. Here we all were, standing on one leg, scratching; there was the evening sea; the bright, blue mackerel; the seaweed. I felt myself engulfed in a sense of warm fellowship that included Akiko, the ancient gentleman, the mackerel, the seaweed, carrying me along with it. Well, there it was. . . . Even miseries, if they are communal, are part of an inevitable destiny; are life; and are to be borne.

## 7

From the moment of my arrival in Japan I was aware of the existence side by side of two dissimilar and incongruous civilizations. The civilization that I had to adjust myself to, while going about my daily affairs, living in Tokyo and Kamakura or travelling about the country, was a Japanese Japan of slow-motion, *shukan*, ritual etiquette, make-believe and mythology. I was also aware of a Westernized Japan that seemed to have been spread thinly over the surface of the other, causing here and there strange eruptions of burlesque and inconvenience. There was, however, still another Japan, for I was forced to accept the judgment of the Western nations that had admitted Japan as a Great Power into their counsels following the World War. This Great Power Japan eluded me. Only in the festivals of the Cult of Emperor-worship and St. Nichiren had I had a hint that the modern rulers of a nation might use an anachronistic civilization for the purpose of aggressive nationalism.



Living at Kamakura we were, for the most part, in contact with the poetry of Japanese life; the strange beauty of the countryside; the appearance of harmony between earth and man; the picturesque ritual of work and worship that to the American is particularly fascinating because they represent values our civilization has discarded for others. Behind this poetry, however, there was the prose—the facts of economic, social and political Japan. I had already seen the prose of the fishing villages, but they had only increased my bewilderment; for there was no evidence that the fisherman thought of his life as prose—on the contrary. Yet I found it difficult to believe that the average Japanese could be contented on the barest subsistence level with, for recreation, an occasional expedition to lance an octopus on the sea, or to bow to a shrine or a landscape.

I wanted to understand, if possible, how those fishing villages could exist. I wanted to find the Great Power Japan. I wanted to understand the connection between the incongruous civilizations.

I began to go farther afield in my viewing—spending week-ends in different parts of the country; walking and talking to the farmers and small shopkeepers in the villages. In the early autumn I went for five days to stay with a missionary family in a prefecture three hours north of Tokyo, taking with me an interpreter. From that central point, we took buses in all directions, and then walked, through farmyard after farmyard, watching the people at work, and chatting with them.

As in our Tokyo neighbourhood, the farmhouses were well designed for the spectator. The fronts were open and faced a yard of hard-packed earth. The work of the family (except, of course, the field labour) is concentrated in house and yard, so that there is everywhere a communal sense of shared occupations, husband, wives, sons and daughters working together.

The early autumn was the most interesting time to visit the farmers, for there were the innumerable chores of utilizing the harvested rice. The farm tools were primitive; the farmer's daughters beat out the rice kernels with jointed wooden flails; the farmer's sons used primitive "science" in the form of a simple husking machine worked by a foot-treadle. I was astonished to find that the rice-straw was as valuable as the rice, and actually supplied an incredible

number of the farmer's needs; thatch for his roof; mats on which to dry the grain; straw for sandals and raincoats; rope for binding the sheaves of grain; or the straw barrels to store it in. The rice husks, burned slowly, made a fine ash to be used as a foundation for the mulberry leaves that nourished the silkworms that were the farmer's subsidiary crop. The rice, we learned, was too valuable for the families to eat. They sold it, or turned it over to the landlord and tax-collector, while they ate the less valuable millet. The farms were mere scraps of rice-paddy. On the tops of the little hills were small patches of eggplant and radish. At the outskirts of the villages were the groves of mulberry trees to feed the silkworms. There were no farm animals. Occasionally we passed a chicken-farm, but we saw very few chickens in the farmyards of individual farmers, and never a pig or a cow. There was an occasional water-buffalo to help with the ploughing, but usually the plough was pulled by the farmer and his wife. Animals are, in fact, so rare that they come under the head of a Great Sight, and one day when I asked permission of a particularly picturesque farmer and daughter to take their pictures, the farmer declined, pointing instead across the field where there was a horse. "Take that," he insisted. It was the only horse I saw on a farm in all my wanderings on Honshu.

The difference between these farms and an American farm was the difference I had noticed everywhere in Japan—fantastic, unbelievable picturesqueness, combined with the very minimum of material wealth. Everywhere I found the same strange beauty of landscape, the same picturesqueness of costume, the same suitability of dwelling that I had found so fascinating on my first walk. An effect of harmony that seemed unreal and dreamlike. This was true everywhere except in the northernmost prefectures, which are, even yet, a frontier-section of Japan. The more severe climate has necessitated a different architecture there, which looks ramshackle. The people seem poverty-stricken; famine conditions are frequent, since rice is an unsuitable crop. In central and southern Honshu, however, the spectator would never guess the poverty that underlies the picturesqueness, so that when I came to study the statistics of the farmer's income, the farms seemed more unreal than ever.

The average farm is two acres—and many seemed to be a mere

pocket-handkerchief of paddy. In a good year, the average family did not see a yen a day in cash, and all the money they could get, and much more, went into taxes and rent and fertilizer. They were eternally in debt. They supplied their meagre material wants from their scrap of paddy, their small patch of vegetables. Some two million families raised silkworms as a subsidiary crop. Many of the small homes had primitive looms where the daughters of the household spun the silk into thread. Artificial fibres, however, were steadily encroaching on the silk market, and the government was working on a scheme for supplying the farmers with simple machines so that they could produce some small export gadget.

These people had none of the satisfaction that the average American farmer takes for granted today. Automobiles and movies were, of course, unheard of—since such things are urban, and for the wealthy. The village radio, when there was one, was usually in the village school, and was put there by the government so that the people could hear the patriotic speeches. For recreation there were the festivals of their nature-and-ancestor worship; the occasional exhibition of wrestling and the small bottle of rice wine; the group pilgrimages to bow to some shrine or landscape or exhibition of flowers. How could an American believe that this country was real!

One week-end we came upon a very large temple that was preparing to celebrate its *o-matsuri*. The temple, we discovered, was dedicated to Hachiman, God of War. Just outside the temple enclosure, a series of small tea-houses had been constructed for the festival, which were dedicated to Hachiman and the Cult of Chrysanthemum-viewing. The Japanese worship some special flower for every season of the year, but because the chrysanthemum is also the symbol for the Imperial Family, it is a special cult, and the chrysanthemums are objects of incredible, fantastic perfection. We entered a tea-house. The walls were decorated with murals symbolizing the country in autumn—a pattern of red maple leaves. The centre of the room was given over to an exhibition of fabulous blossoms. Each one was a work of art, tended carefully by a fancier who had worked with infinite patience to bend the branch to the exact angle desired; who had controlled every blossom, plucking out with chopsticks any petal that might mar the perfection. The colours

were ravishing tones of sea-green and lavender, lemon-yellow with an occasional sharp scarlet or glowing maroon—the combinations of colours were breath-taking. The flowers were almost frightening in their overcultivated perfection. They seemed hardly flowers at all, but *things*—sentient like those jungle flowers that trap the unwary. It was raining, and the patter of the rain could be heard on the paper roof, which let through a shrouded greenish light, so that the effect was of some under-ocean world, and the long, silky petals seemed to flow as though they were the pulsating streamers of some under-water flower.

Around the room a narrow platform had been erected. It was covered with mats and furnished with low tables. Sitting cross-legged on this platform, sipping tea and viewing these incredible blossoms—to honour Hachiman and the Emperor—the neighbourhood farmers were gathered—skintight blue trousers, cloven socks and all.

## 8

Agricultural Japan did not suggest a Great Power. Nor, when I came to examine it, did industrial Japan.

Early October found us settled once more in our Tokyo home. Throughout September I had not only taken trips about the country, but I had, in between, gone into Tokyo and begun to make a systematic round of the various official and semi-official agencies, both Japanese and foreign, presumably dealing with the facts rather than the fantasy of Japan—the Home Office, the Foreign Office, the International Labour Office, the Y.M.C.A., the Institute of Pacific Relations, and so on. I had letters of introduction to individuals in some of these, who passed me on to others, so that I managed a wide variety of contacts. Back in Tokyo, I left immediately to attend a four-day Retreat of the Kagawa Association—an organization of foreign and Japanese Christians to spread the ideas and work of Dr. Kagawa. Here I heard the papers on social conditions in Japan by a number of the most prominent Japanese who have been concerned with Christian social work; and also had private interviews with both Dr. Kagawa and Dr. Sugiyama, a Proletarian Party member of the Diet. Every-

where I was received with the utmost courtesy; was given pamphlets full of statistics, brochures covering everything Japanese from Tea Ceremony to the life of the girl-workers in the textile mills, with innumerable—really wonderful—large magazines, beautifully illustrated, and written in French and English. The more I saw and the more I read, however, the more bewildered I became. For the gap between how Japan looked, how the people behaved, and the economic reality seemed too great to be possible.

Industrial Japan seemed almost as primitive as Japan's agriculture. Only in the heavy industries and textiles were there any plants that could compare with those in the Western nations. And such large, rationalized factories represented a small part of industrial Japan. When I began deliberately to look for Japanese industry, I thought I had not yet seen any of it; actually it had been all around me, for more than sixty percent of the export products were made in the small home workshops like those in our neighbourhood, where husband, wife, children, and perhaps an apprentice or two, worked incessantly turning out some small gadget. Their material was supplied by a middle-man working for some one of the great corporations; and their products were turned over to the same sources. Their earnings barely covered their rent and taxes and their minimum in food and clothes.

Industrial Japan was wholly dependent for markets and materials on foreign nations. The Japanese people did not use the things their simple machines produced. Nor did Japan produce the raw materials with which they were made. Raw silk was the only important raw material, and to this fact was due Japan's extraordinary rise in her export of textiles. For textiles were the life-blood of commercial Japan. They accounted for well over half of her total export trade and were well abreast of the exports of the Western nations. Yet even the textile industry was vulnerable, for raw cotton must be imported, and the woven silk sold outside Japan.

The poverty I saw in farm and fishing village—that was all around me in the little home-workshops in Tokyo—was national as well as local. The national income of America was over twelve times the national income of Japan. And whereas America's income was capable of enormous expansion, Japan's was strictly limited by the facts

of little space, few natural resources, and her dependence on foreign markets. Japan was engaged in an aggressive move against a neighbour; her military expenditures were taking almost half the national budget; yet in terms of U.S. dollars, Japan's military expenditures were less than a third of the peace-time routine expenditures of America,—expenditures, moreover, that represented only fifteen per-cent of the U.S. budget.

The primitive mythological Japan had seemed startling, because it was apparently an integrated part of a modern Great Power. On closer inspection, however, the Great Power Japan seemed almost as much of a myth as the Sun Goddess. Inside Japan, studying the statistics, reading history, viewing the country, it was impossible not to come to the conclusion that, when the Western powers admitted Japan as a presumed equal into their counsels after the World War, they did so because of certain balance-of-power needs of their own, rather than because of the claims of Japan as a modern nation.

Nevertheless, modern Japan had made astonishing progress. It was, however, in terms of her internal growth and change. When Perry "opened the door" in the 1850's, he introduced to the society of nations a group of little islands, about the size of the State of California, that had been cut off from the rest of the world for almost two hundred and fifty years—the years, moreover, during which the industrial revolution was remaking the techniques for producing goods, and remaking social institutions for wide sections of the Western world. This Japan had a population of thirty millions, crowded for the most part into the southern two-thirds of her islands, and supported by agriculture and fishing. Japan had no army in the Western sense; no navy at all; no commercial ships. The people were ignorant of science; had no machines; and hardly more than a handful of guns, which the Dutch traders had provided for them. This Japan was overrun by foreigners who took control of commerce and customs; secured long-term leases; their activities protected by extraterritoriality, and backed by their gun-boats. Just sixty-six years later, this nation, in the person of Marquis Saionji, took its place as one of the "Big Five" at the Paris Conference, to settle the terms of the World War. What makes this spectacle the more-surprising is the absence from that group of Japan's vast neighbour,

China, also one of the Allies in the war, but still not considered an equal, still burdened with extraterritoriality. And what points it finally is the spectacle of vast India—with a population of nearly four hundred millions—still controlled by the small island of Britain. In 1853, when Japan's door was opened, the island kingdom seemed well on the way toward a similar colonial status. What prevented this happening? How did Japan manage to free herself to become an aggressive Great Power?

It was easy enough, reading history, to understand the part played in Japan's spectacular rise by the rivalries of certain Western powers seeking control of the vast wealth and markets of China. It was possible also to understand the enormous energy inherent in the machine. But these were facts available to anyone who was interested enough to go to the histories and read them. What could not be found anywhere was a sensible and satisfactory description of the qualities of Japan's own character and society that must have greatly contributed to her success.

This was the information I sought everywhere as I went from individual to individual, and from agency to agency. It was the subject I had in my mind while I read the histories, brochures, newspapers and magazines. It was, I felt, the most interesting and important of the Japanese mysteries.

## VII

### THE WAY OF THE GODS

"Most of the nations are still in darkness. They are competing with one another, and the strong are feasting on the flesh of the weak, both at home and abroad. That this is so, is the inevitable consequence of civilization founded on materialism and individualism which the peoples of Europe and America have embraced for several centuries. Unless a civilization of a higher order is provided for them, they will find it impossible to pull out of their present plight. The Fascists and Nazis are making an attempt in this direction. Their doctrines may find justification within their own nations, but they are far behind the national belief and State doctrine of Japan."—Pamphlet issued by the Japanese Army to explain its position to the people.

JAPANESE who have lived much abroad seem to become curiously indistinguishable from the natives of their adopted country. It is as though, while living in Japan, repressed in their small islands,

crowded for space, fed on a limited diet, breathing a thick steamy vapour, they have become closed in on themselves like a bulb, the life-germ dormant, so that when they are freed from the special and peculiar conditions of their own land, taken out into full sun and crisp air, given proper nourishment, they develop with astonishing swiftness. Such foreign Japanese seem curiously unlike their own countrymen.

I thought of this often during the days when I was going about asking questions, listening to discussions and lectures, reading reports and essays and statistics, trying to discover what special factors of character and social organization could account for Japan's achievements. I also thought often of the widespread Western belief that the Oriental is enigmatic. I thought of these because I found everywhere, especially among the official and semi-official Japanese, an anxiety to explain themselves and their culture that bordered on hysteria; yet with few exceptions, the explanations offered by individuals who had never travelled or lived abroad were so glazed with a patina of mythology, symbolism and abstraction, as to be almost incomprehensible to the foreigner. In time, however, certain positive statements began to emerge from the forests of mythology and symbolism; and, at last, I was able on my own account to connect the mythological and esoteric meanings with a practical reality.

It was not difficult to discover that whatever it was that had caused Japan to grow "from a pebble small to a mighty rock" (as they phrase it in the national anthem), it was none of the values and institutions or ideas that the American associates with progress. I had already learned, wandering through the fishing and farming villages and the small home workshops of Tokyo, that the terms "individual initiative" and "profit motive" were unknown in such places. Now, reading the pamphlets of statistics furnished most generously by various government and other agencies, and reports of conditions throughout the country, I saw that such notions must be unknown generally throughout the nation. For it was easily verifiable that the general standard of living was, from an American point of view, mere subsistence—and this was true, not only of the farmer and industrial workers, but also for the professional classes.



It seemed, actually, to be true generally except for the handful of extremely wealthy and all-powerful families at the very top, and a small class of well-to-do who were barely "comfortable," as expressed in terms of American dollars. The values and satisfactions of these people could not be expressed in terms of money—what then were their satisfactions?

When I enquired how it was that the people were content to work so long for so little, the answer varied, depending on whether my informant was a Japanese-Japanese who had never been outside his country, or a "foreignized" Japanese who had lived or travelled abroad. The former invariably mentioned the "Sun Goddess," the *Tenno* System, the "Nippon Spirit"; the latter spoke of the "Family System," the "Theory of the State," and the fact that the Japanese is "not a materialist or an individualist."

"Japan's progress," said a Westernized official in the Home Office, to whom I had a letter of introduction, "is due to our homogeneity. We are united by our Family System and by our Emperor. We Japanese are not materialists and individualists as you Americans are. We are all members of a national family. We work together for the national good."

The brisk young Westernized editor of *The Japan Times* said almost the same thing with, however, a slightly different emphasis. "It is our Family System," he said, "that gives us our strength. No American can understand this System, because of your extreme individualism. Particularly no American woman can understand it." He then went on to say that Japanese found it equally hard to understand the freedom permitted to American women. He said that when he had visited America, some years before, a most astonishing thing had occurred. In the Capital at official parties there had been an open feud in progress between Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth and Mrs. Dolly Gann over precedence. Such a thing—so detrimental to the dignity of the nation—could not happen in Japan since women were excluded from such gatherings. From the Japanese point of view, it was as strange that official hostesses should squabble in public in the American Capital as it was strange to an American to have a living God enshrined in the Japanese Capital.

Through Yoso Minamoto, I sat in on a number of sessions of

various "English-speaking Clubs" of university students. When I asked them how Japan had become a Great Power so rapidly, they replied, "The *Tenno* System." To supplement this, they would say only that "The *Tenno* is a kind father." They could say no more, for the un-Westernized Japanese does not discuss his Emperor.

The most realistic of my informants was Mr. Ozume, a business man whom Dee and I tutored in English and American. He was planning a trip to America to buy "missionaries," he told me. He meant machinery, for he owned a foundry in the outskirts of Tokyo where he made parts for buses. In the course of our lessons, he would tell us about his business, and his workers whom he described as "very intelligent." Their normal day of work was eleven hours, from seven in the morning till six at night; but since they were so very intelligent, they liked to make good buses, so, many times they worked thirteen or fourteen hours. They made on the average a yen and a half a day. This satisfied them, Mr. Ozume assured us, beaming like a jolly little gnome, because they liked so much to make good buses for their country.

This statement was matched by a speech given by Mr. Fujiwara, an important business man, and reported in the press. "In any case of emergency, the Japanese will show an extraordinary spirit, and will endeavour to overcome any sort of difficult situation at the expense of his own life. The fact that Japan is strong in time of war is chiefly due to this Nippon Spirit, and at the same time, the fact that the industry of our country shows the present superiority is the boon derived from the Nippon Spirit."

Such phrases, endlessly repeated, summed up the credo of the Japanese: "The Japanese is not a materialist"; "The Japanese is not an individualist"; "The *Tenno* is a kind father." These statements elaborated became: the insistence on the subtlety of the Japanese civilization, the emphasis on the esotericism of their Cults of Tea and Flowers, and the importance of tradition and ritual; became the "Family System," and the "Theory of the State."

According to this "theory," there is no such thing as a Japanese individual—the Japanese belongs to his personal family, which, in turn, belongs to the national family of which the Divine Emperor is the kind father. The Japanese is happy, contented, and in-

dustrious, and does not need money because his satisfactions are social, religious, poetic and moral. . . . This description of the Japanese State and society was told with perfect seriousness by statesmen, editors, professional thinkers, and military spokesmen. It was told by inquiring foreigners; it was told, insistently, by innumerable devices, some of them fanciful in the extreme, to the masses of the Japanese people.

Such a description of society was bound to annoy an American to whom it sounded not only implausible but insincere. It became increasingly apparent, however, that sincere or not it described certain facts and attitudes that were of genuine significance in Japan. And before I was through, I had decided that if they would leave out the word "happy," and rephrase their statements in American terms, one could accept much of the "theory" as an almost literal description of the Before-Perry civilization that had persisted into the modern age. This is not to say that there was no insincerity in the statements. The insincerity, however, was not in the description of values and institutions, but rather in the over-emphasis and insistence on them by the ruling cliques, who were today actively resisting change, and who were using the ancient values and institutions for their own and nationalistic ends.

Before I could understand how this was possible, however, I had to understand the Japanese "Way" and the "Theory of the State" in American terms.

2

The freighter that brought me to Japan was loaded with rusty iron pipes, battered bottle caps, silk stockings full of runners, and ancient newspapers—the leavings of wealthy, extravagant, and wasteful America going to poverty-stricken and frugal Japan. There, if I had had the wit to see it, was the central clue to the mysteries of the Japanese civilization. For the Japanese not only make warships and industrial machines from our old sewer-pipes; not only swell their expanding textile industry with our discarded silk stockings; but even create their art objects from our waste paper—for the *bonkei*, astonishingly realistic miniature landscapes, moulded on trays, are made from old newspapers. It is the newspaper landscapes that tell

the most about Japan. Other people make warships from scrap, but to make a landscape from crumpled newspaper indicates a desire and ability to make poverty picturesque that is noticeable in almost everything about the Before-Perry Japanese civilization.

The civilization that developed in Before-Perry Japan was a brilliant solution for an economy of scarcity. It was the adaptation of an unenergetic people to a Spartan, melodramatic environment. It was based on a subsistence standard of living; and it was a controlled society. Because of the special conditions under which it developed—among which the most striking is the recurrent withdrawal into isolation—the Japanese “Way” represents a controlled laboratory experiment in human relations and social problems.

To say that the Japanese were an unenergetic people, in the face of their modern activities, seems a reckless statement; yet their essential lethargy is strongly indicated by almost every factor of their civilization and Before-Perry history. The first two Japanese words I learned were *mada mada* and *shukan*. These two words which I learned at once in trying to adjust to Dee’s home followed me all about Japan. Their incessant use seemed to me a sharp indication of Japanese character, for surely the sort of behaviour they describe (the habit of always putting off and the habit of always obeying rules and regulations) suggests a lackadaisical nature which is, at first, startling, because so apparently at variance with the modern Empire-builders. Contrast, however, *mada mada* with the American habitual “Comin’ up,” or “Right away”—and the difference in approach toward daily activities becomes clearer. Contrast too the national costumes: the clinging kimono, the high wooden clogs belong to a life of slow motion and inactivity; as shorts and slacks and brief skirts belong to a life of freedom and energetic movement. One could mention innumerable habits and customs—still everywhere popular inside Japan—that suggest the essentially lethargic nature of the Japanese—meditative-sitting, for instance. The impressive evidence for their unenergetic nature, however, is historical.

The way in which they developed their civilization argues for a fundamental lack of energy, for they developed it in recurrent waves of advance and retreat. The Japanese are fond of symbols and it happens that the silkworm on which they based their modern

civilization makes an excellent symbol for Japan. Its life falls into three definite periods: a period of avid absorption of food; a period in which it wraps itself in a cocoon of isolation while the food is assimilated; and a period during which it bursts forth in a brilliant new form. Japanese civilization developed in the same way, by periods of borrowing from foreign cultures, followed by periods of retreat into isolation while the new ideas, institutions and things were digested by the gentry of the Court and the Town, and in this predigested state were allowed to trickle down to the people. From the sixth to the seventeenth century, in recurrent waves, Chinese civilization flowed over Japan. After each period of contact, however, relations were broken off, and Japan remained isolated for centuries. Certain Japanese rulers seemed instinctively to fear too close and continued contact with their powerful neighbour. They were perhaps afraid that if too many traders and artisans and scholars came the military would follow. And, even more than this, they perhaps realized that the poverty-stricken small islands could not afford the luxuries that came into the Capital from the wealthy Chinese courts, as she could not rapidly assimilate the ideas and institutions.

The first advances of European peoples in the sixteenth century were accepted as freely as the Chinese culture had been. For almost one hundred years, Japan received missionaries and traders, accepting Christianity as well as guns. But the Westerners proved quarrelsome among themselves and threatening toward Japan; and when the Shogun learned of a plot (which may have been an invention of the Dutch) by the Portuguese king to annex the Sacred Islands, he expelled the Westerners along with the Chinese, and Japan retired again. During this last long period of isolation, while the Western world was remaking her economic and social institutions under the shock of the industrial revolution, Japan remained cut off from the world, crystalizing her civilization. The nation was not only not aggressive, it was deliberately static.

If further evidence of a fundamental lack of energy is needed, it is necessary only to compare Japanese history with that of the British. Both were little-island peoples—yet by the end of the nineteenth century, when Perry “opened Japan,” the British had swarmed all over the world, had colonized America, had secured control of

vast populations in Asia and Africa, had colonized Australia and New Zealand—had, in short, spread everywhere, exploring, colonizing, trading, conquering. During this time, the Japanese remained huddled in the southern portions of their semi-tropical, lovely islands . . . living frugally on agriculture and fishing, having relations with Asia only and recurrently breaking away to retreat into centuries of isolation. The Japanese did not even subdue the Ainu tribes, which in northern Honshu continually harassed their frontiers, until the end of the sixteenth century. They made no effort to colonize their northernmost island, Hokkaido, until the end of the nineteenth century, after English and American explorers had surveyed the region for them. They made military sorties against Korea in the fourth century, and in the sixteenth—brief, abortive expeditions. That was the extent of their energetic activities.

These people, who preferred isolation and frugality to the effort of conquering and colonizing, adapted themselves to their environment. Their islands were smothered under a humid, heavy atmosphere and excessive rain; they were melo-dramatically beautiful; they were subject to recurrent natural calamities—earthquakes, tidal waves, typhoons. They had neither space nor wealth. Not even space for agriculture, for the mountains everywhere crowded the rice paddies, and even today only fifteen percent of the land is under cultivation . . . and the little vegetable gardens are on top of the hills. The Japanese accepted these conditions and adapted their civilization to them.

The economic solution for this civilization combined fact with fantasy. An agricultural peasantry and an urban handicraft were exploited for the benefit of parasitic nobles and warriors; but no one had much wealth, and at recurrent intervals debts were cancelled, and the rice-lands redistributed. There was little money used. Rice was the wealth and the major medium of exchange, and tradesmen and money-lenders were despised classes, at the bottom of the social scale, below the artisans and peasants.

The population, high and low, was taught by law and by precept, until it became simply habit to do without things, to utilize everything, to waste nothing, to scorn possessions and money. For the masses, the colour and drama of their lives came from their ritualistic

relations with their numerous nature gods, their festivals, their worship of nature. The upper classes, with little to do and nothing to do it with, evolved a make-believe world in which they evaded reality by means of imagination, symbolism, and ritual; a make-believe world in which a flowery terminology substituted for an actual reality; a world in which an elaborate play-acting compensated for a material poverty; an imaginary world designated to produce an illusion of variety, an illusion of extravagance, an illusion of space. The Mysteries, the Cults, the insistence on symbolism and ritual were all eminently practical solutions of practical concrete problems. Theirs was a sensible esotericism. There was method in their madness.

Since they had little to eat, they said that food was Art, and disguised the lack of variety under their ritual of service, their use of decoration, and flowery, imaginative names. Since they must live crowded in minute houses, they worked out an elaborate ritual etiquette that disciplined individual idiosyncrasy, controlled individual emotion, obviated the need for anyone ever to think out his behaviour. A Japanese house is not a "machine for living"; it is a machine for non-living . . . life is turned into an abstraction in which the relations between human beings are as formalized as though life were, in fact, a theatrical performance. Those small, empty rooms do not suggest living . . . stripped of furniture, they suggest a stage that demands formalized behaviour. In Japan there is no space for privacy . . . no room for the display of love, or hate, or personal will. Taught from childhood certain rules, etiquette, the whole complex business of correct behaviour toward superior, equal and inferior, the Japanese grows to manhood behaving reflexively, like an automaton, as his people have since time immemorial. The Japanese civilization, to use the vocabulary of modern psychology, is an astonishing example of the conditioned reflex.

The whole complex of this practical, imaginative civilization is illustrated perfectly by the Japanese attitude toward nature, gardens and Flower Arrangement. The Japanese are known the world over for having a special genius with flowers, and American women study their arrangements and attempt to imitate them. Yet I was astonished

by the tastelessness of many of the arrangements of flowers I saw: two sprays of gladiolus broken off just below the blossom, stuck in a small vase with a sprig of asparagus fern, on the table of a *modan*-style restaurant; two red carnations balanced by two white carnations with, again, a sprig of asparagus fern, set in a long stiff row down the centre of the long tea-table at a party given at the Peers' Club by one of the "cultural" organizations. I was astonished also at the lack of private gardens, and the almost complete lack of flowers. In the city the vast majority of people had no space for even a nasturtium; and the wealthy did not have flowers in their gardens, but had instead rocks, water, some lanterns, stunted pines or other trees. This lack of flowers was equally true in the country. The farmers might have a few flowering shrubs, and, in the autumn, a chrysanthemum or two set out in pots, but this was far from the rule . . . and no farmer could spare good earth for a real flower garden.

Yet flowers were unquestionably a Cult; and Flower Arrangement was an incessant preoccupation. At first this seemed like an unsolvable paradox. It was not, however; for the Cult of flower-viewing, and the art of Flower Arrangement were merely typical of the Japanese genius for disguising a spartan reality behind an elaboration of form and ritual; for letting an imaginary reality compensate for the lack of an actual one.

Flowers are a Cult, precisely because there are so few flowers. They are special and important, and for each season some flower is chosen, exhibited in public parks where the people go, *en masse*, to worship them. Flowers in gardens are impractical, because so short-lived, and they are excluded from the Japanese garden—except in the form of flowering trees—because, since they are impermanent, they can be said, sensibly, to symbolize the brevity of life, impermanence and decay. The rocks and water and trees, which the Japanese substitute, are actually permanent, and so may sensibly symbolize permanence.

So, too, in Flower Arrangement, flowers are largely excluded, and always subordinated to the branches, reeds, stones, water and container. Moreover, in such arrangements it is not the visual effect that is most important, but the symbolic meaning. If the arrange-



ments I saw on dining and tea tables were unattractive, it was because such use of flowers is not a Japanese, but a Western, custom—and the Japanese did not know how to handle it. Americans use flowers everywhere in the house, and the arrangements are intended to be seen from any angle. In Japan, flowers are too rare to be used so carelessly. Their place is in the ceremonial alcove, where in conjunction with a picture scroll, they are not flowers at all, but a symbol of some literary or moral idea. Since this is so, a withered blossom is as good as a fresh bud, better even, if one happens to be composing a poem of frustration—using branches and flowers instead of words.

The entire Japanese civilization—from the minute empty one-room house, and the small gardens, intricately landscaped to create an illusion of distance; to the elaborate rituals of day-by-day relations (that prescribe the correct way to open a door, and to greet a husband); to dining as an art, and the esoteric Cults of Tea and Flowers—is the expression of the Japanese genius for accepting an imaginary reality as substitute for a genuine reality, for controlling individual eccentricity by discipline and ritual, for compensating for a material poverty by an extravagance of form and symbolism. To call this a non-material civilization is, obviously, to describe it accurately.

## 3

The society was also a "controlled society." This was inevitable in an economy of scarcity. When there is little wealth and little space, what there is must be rigorously apportioned, if society is to persist. The central government created laws regulating the most minute aspect of life. These, however, had little force outside of government circles and the large towns. The masses of the people on the lands were controlled by their veneration for the *Tenno* as a religious symbol, by their feudal obligations to the land, by the Family System of rigid relationships. For there was no "individual" Japanese. The Confucian system of relationships of wife to husband, child to parent, man to master, ruled to ruler, had been taken over by the Japanese as an intellectual description of the facts of their society. For the masses, however, these relationships were not stated

in terms of any intellectual system. They operated unconsciously, through habit, custom, the pressure of society. Within this society, there was no freedom of movement from class to class, or from one part of the country to another. Every act was restricted by the complication of laws, duties, etiquette, and habit. Every Japanese was bound to his private family, and to his feudal lord, by a definite code of behaviour. To transgress this code meant social ostracism; which meant, finally, a ritualistic suicide performed in an accepted manner. Yet, the fact that the Japanese evolved such a society, and that it endured for so long a time, strongly suggests that it was not incompatible with the essential Japanese nature. On the whole, for the majority, the satisfactions of the system must have been genuine. The strongest element of control was the lethargic temperament of the Japanese.

It was this static, ritualistic, agricultural Japan upon which Perry "opened the door." The leaders of the opposition clans who overthrew the ruling-clan government and established a "modern" nation with the Emperor at its centre, imported Western institutions ready-made and wholesale and spread them neatly over their ancient civilization as one might spread a cloth over a table. And it changed their civilization just as little as the cloth changes the table. The cloth conceals the table, but it is there, the solid foundation that supports the cloth. The changes seemed sweeping. Feudalism was abolished and the great clan fiefs were turned over to the State. Classes were abolished, the samurai-warriors forbidden to wear swords, and a conscript army of peasants set up on a Western model. A system of public schools was established, a Diet instituted. Behind this façade, the masses of the people continued as before to plant their patch of paddy-field. If they now turned over their crop to a different landlord and tax-collector, the difference was scarcely apparent. The peasants who went to work in the small factories gave their allegiance to their new master as they had formerly given it to their feudal lord. In turn, the employer continued the paternalistic responsibility for his employees.

The notions, however, that had developed with Western machine-civilization were precisely the opposite to those of Before-Perry Japan. Western civilization was an adaptation to vast space, to freedom of

movement, to material wealth. Its values were the rights of the individual, freedom of thought and movement, material rewards. Western civilization dealt with an actual reality, not an imaginary one; believed in actual things—not imaginary things—and believed in real wages to buy the things with. To bring into Japan, even under careful control, Western-style institutions and ideas was like importing dynamite. The only really important natural resource the Japanese leaders had, in their attempt to take their place as a new nation in international society, was the homogeneity of the people, their subsistence standard of living, their habits of economy, their habits of obedience, and their veneration for their nature gods. Once the masses of the people became infected with Western individualism, materialism and scepticism, the entire structure of Japanese society would fall apart.

In 1868, when "modern" Japan was created by changing the outer form of Japanese institutions, the most important internal task of the new rulers was to ensure the acquiescence of the masses in the new regime; to keep them performing their accustomed rites and duties; to keep them content with their standard of living. To accomplish this, they did not have to invent new laws, restrictions, beliefs or formulas. All they had to do was to express in simple terms the principles of life and government that had brought Japan so far along her historic path; principles, however, that had been largely a matter of habit and oral tradition, rather than formulated doctrines. If they could devise such a formula, and express it often enough, they might so fill the minds of the people that they would be unable to hear the new ideas that must, inevitably, come into the country along with the machine.

To help them with this formula, they had the Family System of Confucian relationships; they had their nature gods; and supremely, they had their mythology which tied their nature gods to the Imperial Family. Throughout the history of Japan there had been a curious dualism in government. Only rarely did an Emperor hold actual administrative power. Such control was passed from one clique of rulers to another—sometimes civil, sometimes military—but the reverence of the people for the Emperor as a religious symbol was so great that the winning cliques always had to secure Imperial

sanction, or at least had to appear to secure it. In "restoring" the Emperor as Head of the State, as was done in the "reorganization" of 1868, religion and politics were united in one symbol. To emphasize this, the ruling clique devised the "Theory of the State," which was a combination of Confucianism and Shinto. According to this theory, Japanese society is a family of which the Divine Emperor is the "kind father" and the Sun Goddess, the mother; all Japan and all the people literally belong to the Emperor, who has absolute power over the people. According to the theory, the State is actually a democracy since the Emperor is said to be guided, in making laws, by the will of the people—which he understands through his Divine Intuition. When, therefore, the Emperor gives out an Imperial Rescript he is merely giving voice to a course of action that is not only for the general good, but also expresses the will of the people. In this society, the individual is important only as a member of a family—his private family and his national family. In the private family, the father is the direct representative of the Emperor and has equal power within his small domain. Women have no legal rights; his wife and daughters literally belong to him. The virtues of this society are discipline, obedience, frugality. The Japanese does not need material rewards, for his satisfactions come from serving the family, the nation, and the gods.

These notions that expressed what had been Japanese practice for generations in the form of a body of folk-habits, now became conscious politics. The Japanese leaders seized upon the Western institutions of mass education, and a mass army (as they later seized upon the Western inventions of newspapers and radio), and used these as techniques in a deliberate programme of creating a mass-mind on a national scale. The "Theory of the State" was put in the primary schools and called "History" and "Ethics." It was taught to the recruited peasants in their barracks; it was taught to the reserve soldiers in their regular meetings; it was taught to the people by lectures and speeches at their innumerable festivals of the Emperor Cult. The temple at which I had seen a festival to honour Prince Morinaga had been built as part of the "Reorganization" propaganda drive; as the festival itself was part of the "Manchurian Incident" drive. For, whenever times are exceptionally critical, the propaganda

efforts redouble; and today the Theory was blanketing the country daily from one end to the other. It was even being taught to the schoolgirls in their lessons on Flower Arrangement, for the classic arrangement is constructed to show the relation between Heaven (the Emperor), Earth, and Man.

The machine age came to Japan ready-made along with all the complicated devices of modern finance, commerce, and industry. These devices, borrowed from the West, were set up by a handful of powerful family corporations, who helped finance the reorganization of the government, and then, through government subsidy and support, steadily took over ownership and control of the raw materials of the country, and the management of the new industry, commerce, shipping, banking. The entire economic structure of the country became concentrated under the control of the Eight Great Families—of which the Mitsui, the Mitsubishi, the Sumitomo and the Yasuda were the most important; and of the government. By the period of the World War, the Great Families had also secured open control of the Parliamentary apparatus.

While the masses of the people continued about their daily affairs as they had since time immemorial, the modern nation Japan, resting on top of them, used their labour and docility: to build up an export trade; to finance the army activities in Asia. All of the new wealth that came to the country, from trade and from indemnity from war, was poured into the coffers of the Big Families and the State. By American standards these sums were small, nevertheless since they were concentrated they could be used to the best advantage in purchasing raw materials, and financing construction and manufacturing.

The little island-kingdom Japan was able to take her place in the running with the Great Powers, because she had all the devices of the totalitarian controlled state already in smooth operation, with innumerable devices no other state could match. When the Japanese Military say that the totalitarian regimes in Europe fall far short of the system that has existed in Japan since time immemorial, they are not boasting, but speaking the literal truth. The European controlled societies had to restrict the standard of living for people accustomed to more; had to restrict the liberties of people accustomed

to at least a brief period of democracy; had to revive pagan mythology that had lost its meaning; had to invent ritual practices; had to create a leader cult and sell it to the people. All this the Japanese leaders had ready-made, waiting only to be directed and used.

4

"It is better for women that they should not be educated, because their lot throughout life must be in perfect obedience; and the way to salvation is only through the path of three obediences—obedience to a father when yet unmarried, to a husband when married, and to a son when widowed. What is the use of developing the mind of a woman or of training the power of her judgment, when her life is to be guided at every step by a man? Yet, it is highly important that she should be morally trained, so that she be always gentle and chaste, never giving way to passion inconvenient to others, nor questioning the authority of her elders. For her no religion is necessary, either, because her husband is her sole heaven, and in serving him and his lies her whole duty."—*The Greater Learning for Women*. Written in seventeenth-century Japan.

I was interested now to see in concrete terms precisely how modern industry used the complex of the Japanese Way to achieve results that were astonishing by any standards. The place to see this, of course, was in the textile industry, not only because it was the most important export industry in the country and one of the few that had a big-scale organization comparable to Western nations, but because about 83 percent of its workers were women. I had learned by now that it is the women of Japan who form the real submerged class. I had learned, too, that they are the solid base that supports the economic life of the nation.

I had become interested in the position of women gradually, and largely through my association with Akiko. Through her eyes I saw that almost anything that an English or American woman might do in Japan was, from the point of view of a Japanese woman, unbecoming, if not outrageous, behaviour. Akiko never ceased being astonished at the things that Dee and I did as a matter of course. This applied to even so trivial a matter as our dropping into a *modan* café for a *hamu* sandwich and a glass of *biru*; and our more serious activities really flabbergasted her. That we were free to change our residence at will; to go to Nikko on one week-end for the autumn festival, and, on the next, to go off to another prefecture to see something that interested us there; to present to government

officials requests to visit factories; to ask such officials questions; and to question other people about such things as wages and income and hours of work; to go out to dinner casually with gentlemen; to discuss, and even argue, with Mr. Sato and other male visitors—such things were, in the eyes of Akiko, fantastic behaviour. And, of course, most fantastic of all, was the fact that we were in Japan and spending money we had earned ourselves! This sort of freedom was too much for Akiko to grasp easily.

It was in terms of such reactions on her part, and the questions she asked me about life of women in America, that I came gradually to piece her story together, learning, in the process, what the "Theory of the State" and the "Family System" meant in concrete practice for women, and how difficult it was for a woman to defy the System.

Akiko seemed destined, from the beginning, to illustrate the discomfort of being caught between two very different civilizations. She was born in Kyushu, the southern island, in a northwestern town that was, geographically, in closest contact with the Europeans who came to Japan first in the sixteenth century. For when in the seventeenth century, these foreigners were expelled and Japan's last period of isolation began, a handful of Dutch, Portuguese and Chinese traders were permitted to maintain trading-posts on a small island off the coast of Nagasaki which happened to be not far from the neighbourhood where Akiko's family had lived for generations. Akiko's grandfather was a samurai-of-the-gown, a member, that is, of the aristocracy, a man employed by his clan in administrative duties, an "intellectual." He was interested in the foreigners and their strange ways and was, finally, permitted by his clan to go to Nagasaki ostensibly to study the theory of making guns with a Dutch scholar. It was, however, necessary first to learn the Dutch language, a strange business written with letters instead of characters, and horizontally instead of vertically, so that her grandfather succeeded only in increasing his curiosity about European civilization. This curiosity and tolerance for foreign ways became a family tradition . . . so that Akiko's father, who was born just ten years after Commodore Perry broke down Japan's isolation policy, was psychologically prepared to accept the Western-style innovations

that outwardly changed Japan's feudal society into a "modern nation." This friendliness on the part of her family was to have the greatest possible influence on Akiko's life.

For many years, however, the momentous changes that were apparently remaking his country affected Akiko's father very little. He had been permitted by his clan to study medicine from a Dutchman in Nagasaki, and he was able to earn a small sum by this practice to supplement the small stipend with which the new government had compensated the classes formerly supported by their feudal clan. He and his wife—a lady also of aristocratic birth—lived quietly in their small village, continuing the round of ritual events much as they always had. Their life, however, had one great sorrow. They were childless. In the Japanese system, it was unheard of for a family not to have children. The continuity of the family, both in this world and the world-to-come, was the central core of the Family System. To ensure this continuity, the Japanese system permitted various expedients: a childless woman could be divorced without formality; the husband might take a second wife, or a third; or a son might be adopted. The powerful families of Japan have largely maintained their virility through the adoption of strength and intelligence in the form of some promising individual from another family or class. Even the Imperial Line has not hesitated to use adoption—an indication of how deeply ingrained in Japanese custom is the belief that adoption makes the child genuinely of the family's blood and bone.

A childless woman, however, might find none of these alternatives satisfying. Akiko's mother was devout and she believed that if she prayed unceasingly to the right god she herself would eventually have children. She begged her husband to have patience. While they were considering this problem, the Sino-Japanese War broke out, and Akiko's father was sent to the continent.

While he was gone, his wife was introduced to Christianity. There had been, of course, a ban against Christianity since the expulsion of foreigners in the seventeenth century. With the "opening of the door," however, this ban was lifted and missionaries came into the country in great numbers. One of them settled in the village where Akiko's family lived; and while Akiko's father was



in Korea, Akiko's mother heard about this missionary who was teaching the powerful God of the powerful foreigners. Since her own gods had not answered her prayers for a child, perhaps the foreign god would. Timidly, she went to the mission. She could not read the tracts they gave her, for like most of the ladies of her time, she had never learned to read, but she was assured that if she had faith her prayers would be answered. When Akiko's father returned, he consented to baptism. That was in 1896. The first child, a son, was born in 1898. A daughter followed in 1900; and as a final miracle, Akiko in 1910. Akiko, child of their full maturity, seemed to the mother the final benediction of the Jesus-God, and for the father, the final confirmation of his faith in Western ways. This did not mean, however, any lessening of their devotion to the Divine Emperor who represented their native gods; nor did it, in their home, change any of their habitual patterns of behaviour. Neither her father nor mother saw the conflict inherent between their own beliefs and customs and those of the West, because for them the Western ways were merely restatements of familiar beliefs. But Akiko began her life in two traditions and continued it so—trapped between two conflicting points of view. Caught in the full flood of the forces that were remaking her country, she was swept along an inevitable path, so that she may almost stand as the prototype of heroine or victim of her times—a bewildered individual behaving under compulsion of forces she is unaware of—uprooted from the security of one system, and unable to find firm foothold in another.

Akiko began life in the strange, unreal world of un-Westernized Japan, and her early influences and training were wholly Japanese. She spent her childhood under the tutelage of her mother, who instilled in her the Japanese ideal that the whole purpose of life—for a Japanese woman—was to be an obedient child, a good wife, and a wise mother.

The family had maid-servants, but Akiko was taught the duties of a housewife: cleaning the mats, scrubbing the woodwork, the care of the ceremonial scrolls and the few family treasures, the preparation and serving of food, and most important, sewing. She was taught deportment and etiquette; the correct phrases for each occasion; what gifts to give and when; the way to enter and leave

a room; the correct way to open and close a door; the way to greet an inferior, an equal, a superior. She was permitted to watch her mother create a Flower Arrangement, was instructed in the serving of Ceremonial Tea. She was, in other words, given the conventional education of a girl of the upper classes.

History, however, overtook Akiko at the age of seven when she ceremoniously entered in the primary school which had been established in the neighbourhood as a response to the educational reforms of 1872.

As I listened to Akiko telling about her childhood, it was suddenly clear to me, as never before, how revolutionary, in Japan, had been the institution of compulsory mass-education. In the Before-Perry society, the only schools had been those conducted by the priests of certain Buddhist temples, or a few conducted by scholars for a handful of the upper classes. Hardly anyone could read. Even literature and drama were kept alive by oral tradition—the tales and dramas passed on in families, taught by the older generations to the new as recitations. Every sort of intellectual exercise, even the simplest, had been the province of some special traditional class, so that even simple sums in arithmetic were beyond the capacity of the mass of the people. Since it had not been *shukan* to educate even the males, to educate women was revolutionary in the extreme. Moreover, it was dangerous. Woman's place was one of obedience. It was not necessary for her ever to think about anything. What would become of her traditional docility if she were permitted to attend classes in the same primary schools with boys; if she were taught to read and write and do sums? The predicament of the Japanese rulers here was a very serious one. It was necessary to establish the schools as a proof to the Western powers that Japan was becoming a modern nation. It was equally necessary that woman's traditional docility be undisturbed by "dangerous thoughts" of independence. They solved this problem, as Akiko had told me long before, by making the "Theory of the State" the central core of education. Because of this emphasis, the little girls now in school were constantly reminded that education was a privilege and a responsibility—that they must first of all be obedient, for if they were disobedient to their father, they were also defying their Divine Emperor.

Besides these lessons, which she had already learned at home, and certain domestic courses, Akiko had studied geography—which meant the location of the great national shrines where the national deities were especially honoured. She learned how to do simple arithmetic, foreign-style; how to write and read certain Chinese characters, and the Japanese characters that were the Japanese adaptation of Chinese to the purposes of their polysyllabic language. By these exercises Akiko's mind was stimulated, even if it was memory rather than reason that was involved.

Akiko's education did not stop here. As she passed the fourth year of her six years of primary school, her father permitted her to go to the priest of the Christian mission for lessons in English and Christian theology. This marked the beginning of conflict for Akiko, although she did not for a time recognize it as conflict. At first it was merely a strange unfamiliar sense of uneasiness. It was partly to do with her relations with the neighbour children, and partly in relation to her brother. During this period the Japanese were sharply divided into pro- and anti-Westernization, and many of Akiko's neighbours resented her family's Christianity and her studies with the priest. At the public school the boys bullied her, called her "Jesus-child" and mocked her. At home when her brother snatched her toys and annoyed her, it was Akiko whom her mother reproved. That girls should acquiesce if boys chose to bully was the Japanese Way, and although the boys were trained not to bully, the weight of discipline fell on the girls to give no occasion for it. Akiko had accepted this as the natural lot of a girl until she was taught by the priest that in the eyes of the foreign god, girls were the equals of boys. The confusion Akiko felt was, of course, not clearly understood by a little girl who had received a thorough Japanese training. It made her, however, more susceptible to dangerous thoughts if she should ever come in contact with them.

She came in contact with them. Her father, faithful to his approval of Western custom, decided that Akiko should continue her education. There were no schools for girls in the district higher than the required primary grades. But Akiko's sister had married and settled in Tokyo. At the age of thirteen, Akiko was taken to her sister and installed in her home, and entered in a high school

for girls as a day pupil. Since her sister was childless, it was tacitly understood that, in time, Akiko and her future husband would be adopted by Hana San's husband.

There are relatively few schools for girls above the primary even today. In 1923 the girls who went to these high schools were a special class, limited not only by the scarcity of the schools, but by the customs of the times and the expense. The tuition was only 4.50 yen a month, yet it was much more than the average family could readily spend on so questionable a value as education of a girl. In this school, Akiko learned more Chinese characters, more Japanese mythology, more arithmetic, more ethics, a little European history. The emphasis was still on Chinese characters, on history, ethics, and on the domestic courses, which included cooking, laundering and sewing. There were daily calisthenics, and the girls were allowed to run and were instructed in certain Western games with balls.

These were happy days for Akiko. The conflict was no longer apparent, since there were no boys in the school to bully her, and since all the girls came from the same sort of West-admiring homes. In her family she was the petted little sister-daughter, with pretty kimono for her leisure time, to replace the white blouse and long pleated skirt which was the school uniform. With her schoolmates, she enjoyed the semi-freedom of this new release from service at home, and the new sense of dignity that comes from learning. But she was a normal girl, and was more concerned about a new kimono or a game of battledore than with her lessons, and her happiest times were when she was taken with a group of her schoolmates to one of the public parks to view the flower exhibitions, or when they clustered in a giggling group around the entrance to the school grounds to watch the procession of a local festival.

She finished high school in 1928 when she was eighteen, and her sister, obedient to the desires of the father, enrolled her the following year in a woman's college—a college founded and conducted by foreign missionaries, for there were no such Japanese institutions for girls.

While Akiko was becoming a "modern" woman, her country was becoming a "modern" country. From the beginning of the World War the tempo of change in certain urban, industrial, and even

agricultural centres accelerated much too rapidly for the Japanese to digest. The upsurge of industry drew agricultural workers into the industrial centres; it converted agricultural land into factory sites and homes for industrial workers; business expanded and profits skyrocketed. In the midst of the whirlwind, the every-man-for-himself psychology of Western industry began in certain centres to replace the older paternalistic relationships. In the cities increasing numbers of individuals were brought into the danger-zone of direct contact with new ideas and new ways of life. Inevitably, certain groups became disillusioned with the Way of the Gods and ready to listen to other solutions for the emerging problems of worker and employer.

During the upsurge of the War years, and stimulated by the Russian Revolution, the mild flames of liberal thought flared into what was, for Japan, a minor conflagration. There were efforts made to form labour and agricultural unions; and when, in 1925, a limited suffrage was granted, there were even attempts made to form labour and peasant political parties. University students read Marx and Engels, and formed clubs to discuss social change; Rousseau, Shaw, and Gorki littered the second-hand bookshops; proletarian novels, plays and even movies began to be written by Japanese. All of these activities affected a small proportion of the population—only those groups that had direct contact with the changes caused by expanding industry and increasing Westernization. Few, if any, were actually “radical” in a Western sense. Nevertheless, the government passed laws against “dangerous thoughts”; political parties were suppressed as soon as they were formed; there were frequent “Communist” purges. Even members of the House of Peers resigned under suspicion of favouring political liberalism; and daughters of nobles were accused of being “Communists,” were imprisoned and committed suicide.

All this, apparently remote enough from the life of Akiko, was shaping her future. In the normal course of events her family would have chosen a suitable husband for her; who would—since Akiko was to be adopted by her sister’s husband—have taken the name of Akiko’s brother-in-law. Akiko would then have settled down quietly within the secure routines of the Family System to

function as a good wife and a wise mother. In going to college, however, she had already taken a long step out of the system. And events contrived to carry her farther.

In the first place, in the college there were certain teachers who described the events of the Russian Revolution and the theory of Communism. Most of the teachings did not much impress her, since her foundation of the Japanese Way served as an excellent insulation. The notion of man exploiting man had no meaning for her, since it was completely outside her experience, and she had been taught that the Japanese system accomplished the greatest good for all. There was, however, one point at which this teaching had personal significance for Akiko. Under Communism, her teachers said, women were to be comrades and equals. This doctrine spoke directly to her—pulled into focus all the questions that had slowly accumulated in her mind since childhood. These questions, of course, were not clearly formulated; they were merely a vague sort of uneasiness in her subconscious reactions to the idea of her future marriage. They would probably have remained safely buried, if the improbable had not happened.

But the improbable did happen. Akiko met a Communist. He was Ino, the cousin of a college friend, and she did not know he was a Communist when she was visiting the home of her friend one afternoon. All that she knew was that he, a man, stepped beside them and deigned to chat for a moment. She was furiously embarrassed, and, after he had gone, was aware of an agitation of a sort she had never known before. During her college years, she visited her friend often, and sometimes he was there, and it seemed to Akiko that he was there expecting her.

Finally, without consulting his parents or hers, he asked her to marry him. It was then he confided to her that he was a Communist, and that he needed a wife to help him in his work.

It was a serious predicament for Akiko. The climax had come just before she finished college, but several months passed as she temporized, hesitating to tell her family of this unconventional marriage. Ino, whom she saw surreptitiously in company with her now frightened friend, insisted that they must be modern. Akiko, he said, must simply announce their decision. When Akiko finally

did so, she unleashed a furious storm. Her sister's husband—an official in a government bureau—was bitterly opposed to the match, not only because Akiko had broken every convention in choosing her own husband, but because the man had no social or financial security to offer. The young man was a common printer, in the eyes of this official. He did not know of Ino's radical political views, for there Akiko had sworn secrecy. But although the Tokyo branch of Ino's family was respectable enough, his parents, in a distant province, were of small means, and he did not seem a promising person to carry on the family traditions. Hana San's husband might be a modern man, interested in Western science and techniques, but when it came to his women, he was a Japanese, and in domestic affairs the Japanese Way was best.

Akiko did not herself understand how she dared to defy her family. Her modernization had occurred so slowly, so subtly, that it was impossible to say at what point the acquiescent Japanese girl yielded to the modern woman. But she had been exposed to the new ideas in too many ways, for too long a time, not to be now in time of crisis influenced by them. Her feeling for Ino, her college lectures about Communism, scraps of remembered American movies, the words of her father and the priest praising the new way . . . all these together were strong enough to turn Akiko from a manageable daughter to a sullen rebel. The project of adoption was dropped, Akiko was disowned by her sister's husband. She married Ino.

Having behaved like a "modern" woman, she expected a modern marriage. Her husband when he was not working as a compositor, was busy translating party doctrines into Japanese. Akiko had worked hard at her English so that she might be able to help him in the work—hoping of her marriage the kind of companionship between husband and wife that she had been taught to associate with Communism and Western custom.

Her disillusion was almost immediate. Ino was a self-absorbed male, involved in dangerous enterprises, and he wanted as wife an efficient domestic machine. It was in this sort of service that she could help him, and a Japanese wife is the best-trained in the world for this purpose. Housework was heavy, for he was poor, and she did not now have time for her studies or for helping him in his

translating, even if he had wanted her help. He made no such request. Instead he expected her to carry out the most exacting demands of domesticity, self-effacingly as befitting a Japanese wife. When, very soon, he began to visit another woman, Akiko was miserable. Her training did not permit her to protest but her expectation of something different made her disappointment the harder to bear. Behaving reflexively, she performed her duties and concealed her sorrow, which was the keener because so unexpected, so unfamiliar.

This interval of marriage did not last long. The blow fell suddenly. There was a beating on the door in the night; the forced entrance of a group of little men in uniforms, carrying police sticks and decorative lanterns. Akiko was beaten as she cowered before these men, trembling and ashamed in her night kimono. She hardly felt the blows—she was too numb with terror, so agonized with anxiety about her husband. He made no resistance. They were hurried off and thrown into jail. The 1933 purge was on.

Akiko would not talk about the next few months in jail. Finally, however, the police were satisfied that she knew nothing of her husband's associates, and that there were no thoughts in her head dangerous to her country. She was released. Ino was kept in jail without being charged—endlessly waiting for a hearing.

He had been in jail now for two years, and, Akiko said bitterly, he was getting used to it. Every two weeks, during those years, Akiko had dressed in her best, had gone to see him, taking him books and paper and clean clothes; bringing back his shirts and *tabi* and kimono to launder. Every time, her bundle was examined before she was admitted, and almost any writing was considered suspect. Even picture books got her into trouble. She had borrowed from Nobu a volume of reproductions of great paintings from European museums. She brought it back mutilated. The guards had ripped out all of the nudes before passing it in.

Akiko had been released to an unfriendly world. Her sister's husband refused to receive her into his home. Her father was long since dead, and her mother, in distant Kyushu, was living with her son who was not as sympathetic toward these new ways as had been his father, and who bitterly resented Akiko's defiant marriage. Her



husband's family lived in a distant place, and their suggestions for receiving her were courteously discouraging. His Tokyo relatives made no advances. Akiko was rescued by Nobu, who suggested to Dee that she take in Akiko as a companion-housekeeper. It had been a satisfactory solution for both of them. Akiko had more freedom and companionship than she had ever had in her life. And she had wages—a sum of money regularly—all her own. As for Dee, she had found a friend.

But what of the future? Certainly the years ahead looked black enough. Dee would not always be in Japan, and what then? No matter how hard Akiko might study her typing, it was unlikely that she would ever get a job that would pay her enough to be self-supporting, especially since she was under a cloud—a jail sentence for “dangerous thoughts.” What employer would trust such a girl? Moreover, she was married. One day her husband would come home from prison, in what physical and mental condition after two or more years of segregation, it was impossible to foresee, although it was possible to guess the precariousness of his economic future.

Akiko had been whipped by the times. Despite her American slang, her foreign clothes, her ready companionship with foreigners, at bottom all her reactions and values were still those of a Japanese girl, and her consciousness of being outside the accepted circle of the Japanese Way took the form of a sense of insecurity that was the cruellest punishment of all.

Akiko and her country were struggling against irresistible forces simultaneously, and the days ahead would be hazardous for both.

## 5

My inspection of the textile industry started with a cotton mill, the Dai Nippon Tokyo factory. The Dai Nippon is one of the largest of the textile companies, and the Tokyo factory which Akiko and I visited was the prize factory—the factory which was shown to all interested foreigners as a demonstration of Japanese paternalism and organization at its best. I was sent there by Mr. Toko, an official in the Home Office to whom I had a letter of introduction. Mr. Toko was the kewpie-type of Japanese, round good-humoured face and twinkling eyes. He spoke excellent English, having spent

much time in both England and America. To reach him I had to run a considerable cordon of guards and secretaries, but once in his office, I might have been merely visiting an old friend. It took some time, however, to make arrangements for me actually to visit a plant. He was almost embarrassingly cordial; he took me to lunch in foreign-style restaurants, and dinner in Japanese places. He introduced me to an American-educated young Japanese woman who had a job with the Tokyo Bureau of Social Service and who initiated me into the mysteries of Japanese social-work. He kept promising to arrange the factory visit, and finally—after dozens of appointments, most of them at eight in the morning, and messages—for I was persistent, it was organized.

In preparation for my visit, Mr. Toko had given me a descriptive booklet, text and excellent photographs, showing the small girl workers leading an ideal life.

"Of course," he had said with a man-to-man twinkle, "this pamphlet was got up to show at the International Labour Congress."

Japanese rationalizations take place in the realm of mythology. They can explain the acquiescence of labour in terms of the Sun Goddess with perfect seriousness. But such rationalizations in Western terminology are beyond them—they are too bald, too unsymbolic, too obviously insincere. Japanese like Mr. Toko have travelled enough in the West to observe conditions that convince them that Western management's expressed concern for labour is a game. They try to play it; they have learned the rules; they can issue statements and prepare reports expressing the sentiments they feel are expected of them; but—in unmythological terms, the hypocrisy is too apparent. So they give one the knowing elbow in the ribs. I understood that I was expected to realize that the Dai Nippon was a model institution which it was a pleasure to show to foreigners.

To reach the factory, Akiko and I rode in a taxi for more than an hour, and came to a stop in a muddy road outside a high stone wall that suggested a penitentiary. The entrance was guarded by a watchman who expected us. Beside him waited a little girl in a white middie blouse and black pleated skirt who led us to an office where we were served tea. We were joined at once by a man in

foreign clothes whose hollow cheeks gave him a saturnine appearance, but whose manner was cordial. He led us on a swift tour of the plant, which took an hour from the time we passed into the mill, beginning where the piles of raw cotton stood waiting, through various processes, room after room, until we followed the finished product, packed in burlap in the form of cotton cloth and white thread, out to the narrow-gauge track that would take it to the main line and the markets of the world.

How un-Japanese were these huge chambers of steel and glass, and yet, how Japanese the steaming heat of the atmosphere. In one room, fluffs of cotton filled the air like some warm snowstorm and a young girl chased them about with a bamboo fan attached to a gigantic pole. The plant was highly rationalized, and one girl handled thirty or forty looms. The workers were so small that they all looked like children, and their uniform of white middy, short black shirt, and white cap added to the little-girl appearance. Standing in a long row of roaring, whirling machines, ceaselessly performing an endless number of tasks, they gave a touch of fantastic unreality to what was the most practical reality in the Empire. They worked with a concentrated intensity, yet, if they noticed us as we passed, they stopped their work to bow.

We next viewed the dormitories. Leaving our shoes at the door and putting on felt slippers, we entered a narrow corridor along which came a procession of girls, from the morning shift, on their way to the bath-house. They all stopped dead, and with expressionless faces, bowed low, long braids bobbing down their backs. Suddenly I was reminded of the mechanical Japanese dolls who bob their heads back and forth at the tap of a finger, that used to fascinate me when I was a child. We passed rooms where classes in sewing were conducted. We saw also classes in ethics and history under the ægis of an elderly gentleman in a grey silk kimono. The wall of the history classroom was papered with pictures of the Meiji Shrine which the professor told us were used to illustrate his history lessons. In the auditorium, a group of girls, in their cotton everyday kimonos and bare feet, were being taught etiquette. We saw the dining-room, the swimming-pool. The kitchen was large and clean and the food smelled delicious. We saw the clinic, a

doctor (in action), a dentist (in action), the pharmacy, the infirmary. The mill was a walled town, self-sufficient, oblivious of and indifferent to the rest of the world.

After we had seen everything, we asked if we might talk to some of the girls. "*Dozo.*" (Please.) We were escorted back to the office and joined by another saturnine gentleman and, after an interval, by two girls, pretty and dignified in formal kimono. We all sat about the table and were served tea, which the girls did not touch. They sat very straight, flanked by the two gentlemen. I was urged to ask them anything I wanted to. Akiko put the questions for me and translated the answers. It was my impression that everything the girls said was verified by the management. Through our exchange of question and answer, they lived their daily life for us. The story of one was, with minor variations, the story of the other—and the story of all.

Let us take the girl called Tsuki.

Tsuki San was the daughter of a small farmer from a village an hour's journey north of Tokyo. She was eighteen years old and had worked in the Dai Nippon for nearly three years. She lived in the dormitory, a two-storeyed barracks adjoining the mill, separated from another by a small garden with a lawn of turf and a large swimming-pool. Tsuki's sister, Tama, lived in the neighbouring dormitory, but they seldom saw each other. The sixteen hundred girl workers were divided into morning and afternoon shifts, and the routine of their lives kept them apart.

Tsuki San shared a fifteen-mat room (15 ft. x 18 ft.) with nine other girls, one of a long row of rooms under the supervision of a matron. When she was on the early shift, the rising gong sounded at 4 a.m. By 4.05, Tsuki was jostling her roommates as they rolled up their bedding and packed it away in the cupboards behind the sliding panels. Working swiftly, the girls swept and scrubbed the white matting of the room and the corridor outside. The head girl made sure that they were all up in time, and the room left in order—that is, clean and empty except for the low table with perhaps a mirror, an alarm clock, a vase of flowers. The room tidy, Tsuki washed quickly at the grey cement trough at the end of the corridor,

and slipping into her work uniform, scurried to the auditorium for setting-up exercises under the direction of a health instructor attached to the mill staff. Breakfast, of fermented bean soup, fish, rice, and radish pickle, came at 4.30. At 5 a.m. she was at her machine.

Tsuki San's job was to watch for defects in the finished cloth. Miles of white cotton shirting, in a monotonous flow, climbed up her machine, passed through the roller, and beyond her, ascended to the high roof, then descended into the folder. She watched with a practised eye for any irregularity, an extra thread, a smudge of oil. With a quick movement of the lever, she stopped the machine, picked out the extra thread with a sharp comb, rubbed the spot smooth. She did not think. In the beginning the work was difficult, and it was three months before she felt at ease, but now her movements were as automatic as those of the machine. She became tired, of course, but with the fatigue of young muscles which spring back very quickly. She could not leave her machine, but at 10.30 there was a half-hour for a wash and lunch. At 11, she was back at her machine, where she watched the endless flow of white cloth until 2 p.m. when the other shift came on.

Work over, a long afternoon ahead, what did Tsuki San do with it? She wasted no time in deciding . . . it was all planned for her. From 2 until 3.30, her time was all her own. She hurried to change her work uniform for a kimono, and then, her hair down her back in a bobbing braid, carrying her *tenugui*, her soap bag, and perhaps a pail of clothes to launder, she pattered down the corridor on *tabi'd* feet to the huge bathroom for a general cleaning-up and social half-hour with her friends. Here, as she washed her hair, or laundered her clothes, standing with the others at the low cement basins, she could make up in chatter for her silent hours at the machine. It was now nearly 3 p.m. If it was summer, she could go for a swim in the outdoor pool, or sit on the grass in the garden. Or she might rush to buy a brace for her *obi*, or some sewing silk, from the branch of the large Tokyo department store situated conveniently for her within the mill walls. In winter, she would carry from the kitchen the redhot charcoal for the brazier which was the only heat in the dormitory, and then she and her friends could sit huddled around

it, chatting until 3.30.

At 3.30, she had to be in the classroom. She might have a class in arithmetic, writing, composition, geography, history, sewing, ethics, knowledge of national life, international topics. There was a definite schedule and each day had its special subject. Sometimes she gathered with a group of fifty in the large auditorium and was taught deportment. Sometimes she was even instructed in Tea Ceremony and Flower Arrangement. This was a rare privilege, for usually a farmer's daughter had no opportunity to learn these rituals. Tsuki San liked her sewing classes best, for in them she made kimono for her troussseau, and other articles of clothing, and perhaps dresses for her small sister. Every Japanese woman must be a competent seamstress, for no self-respecting Japanese man would marry a girl who could not sew and, if she did not learn at the mill, she would have to go to a sewing school for a term before marriage.

At 4.30, the class was over and Tsuki San, carrying her chopsticks, went to supper in a large dining-room decorated with posters showing muscular young men doing gymnastics, and cherry trees blossoming in Kyoto. She sat at a Western-style table with seven of her friends and there was no time for ceremony. She helped herself to rice and *tempura* vegetables (fried in a pastry-batter) and radish sauce—which were piled in wooden tubs in the centre of the room—eating from a small, individual tub, and washing it all down with tea. The meals had the proper number of calories and were passed by the inspector of the police department. After supper she took a bath, parboiling with her friends for ten minutes in a large cement tank at a temperature of 112° Fahrenheit.

Then she was ready for more classes. She was at her desk at six, and stayed there until nine, learning sewing, history, ethics, etcetera. Dismissed from class, she went to her room in the dormitory, took her mattress and quilt from the cupboard, arranged them on the matting, allowing a foot of space on all sides between hers and the mattresses of her neighbours. Usually she slept very soundly. Whirrrrr! Four a.m.

The shift was changed every week, with Sunday a holiday. When Tsuki was on the late shift, she got up at 8 a.m., and had the advantage of a Buddhist religious service in the auditorium. She

attended classes during the morning, went to her machine at 2, and worked till 11 p.m. By 1 a.m., she was in bed. She liked the early shift better.

Once or twice a year, classes were suspended and a movie was shown in the auditorium. Sometimes on a national holiday some respected great men came and told them about the Nippon Spirit. Occasionally she might go out for a half-day's picnic with the other girls of her shift, otherwise there was no reason for her to leave the mill grounds, as everything she wanted was supplied to her there.

Tsuki began at a wage of 35 sen a day, but had been raised to 45 sen. At New Year's, she received a bonus of 5 yen. She paid the mill 15 sen a day for board, and two percent of her wages went for government health insurance. She was not paid for Sunday or holidays. Except for an allowance of 1 yen a month, her money was sent by the management to her parents.

I had been listening intently, but at this point I suddenly remembered that the dividend rate for the textile industry for the first six months of 1935 was 15.4%, and the profit rate 32.2%.

Akiko was slowly translating. The girl said that she came to the mill to help her family and to save money for her trousseau. She had not realized that she could not leave the mill and was sorry not to see the beauties of Tokyo, but she was busy and had no time to think about it, or to go out. She expected to send her money to her parents anyway and it was convenient that the mill did it for her. She did not need much money for herself.

Had Tsuki known of profits and dividends, what meaning would they have had to her? She was housed and fed. She was receiving an education. And all she had to do was to work at a machine for eight hours. Her hours at her farm home were longer, the work harder, the food not so good. When had a farmer had *tempura* vegetables? She was accustomed to obedience, and had never had so much as a sen to spend on herself. A yen a month was a fortune.

Tsuki would work in the mill, perhaps, for four years, although most of the girls stayed only three. Then she would return to her farm home and if her family had been able to save some of her money for a trousseau, they would find her a husband, a neighbour-farmer. She would marry him, and he might well consider that her

years of mill discipline had served as a finishing-school in the educational process that had shaped her for the Japanese ideal of "good wife and wise mother."

The Japanese could well point with pride to the perfection of their system. It had every advantage of conscript labour and none of the disadvantages. Here was a young girl who was self-supporting; who was helping her family during hard times; was helping her country; who was, meanwhile, housed and fed luxuriously; sheltered from any harm; educated beyond the possibilities of her farm home; who would be released after a few years to an assured marriage. It behoved those European countries that believed in a controlled society to look to Japan for guidance; for how amateurish and inadequate did the Nazi "Strength Through Joy" labour service seem when contrasted with the integrated Japanese Way that functioned from childhood on, and touched every part of life. Tsuki San was prepared for her mill job by her home conditioning, her education, her economic dependence. There was no ambition to make her restless. Her "ambition" was to perform her duty, to marry the man whom her family should select, to have children in her turn, preferably boy children to carry on the family name and serve the ancestors and the country. This was not coercion—it was *shukan*. Here was another paradox of Japan. Part of the dynamic force behind her powerful advance was inertia—the steady unthinking pressure of a mass—unvolatile and irresistible.

Like Akiko, Tsuki had been caught by the upsurge of the new Japan. Tsuki, however, had been carried along in the current without even feeling the motion. Her sleep had never been disturbed. Not one of her fundamental truths had been shaken. For Tsuki there was no conflict. She was completely insulated against "dangerous thoughts." She was living in two worlds, but she did not know it.

There remained the problem of what would happen to Japanese industry should Tsuki awake from this sleep, to learn about a society where the woman received the wages she earned, earning enough to live independently; marrying, if she chose to marry, the man of her own choosing, whose equal she would be before the law. Was it possible to guess from the reaction of Akiko, whose disapproving,



"These girls are not awoken yet," was obviously based on her own experience of certainly questionable independence? Mr. Toko had said to me, "Now, 90% of these girl workers are happy and contented, and 10% discontented. But if propaganda and agitators got in among them, within six months, 90% would be discontented and 10% contented." Certainly it would be impossible for an "agitator" to reach behind these walls to these girls. Moreover the classes kept them too busy to leave time for "dangerous thoughts." But how typical was this mill? And how average was Tsuki? Like all answers in Japan, this led only to more questions.

## 6

For the next month or two, my life was a series of false trails and blind alleys, as I went about attempting to discover if there was a labour movement among the women workers. I was told innumerable times, by people who should have known, that there was not. I persisted in my search, however, because I found along the way so many things of interest. Since Akiko could not always accompany me, I collected during this time an assortment of interpreters whose different personalities added another element of excitement to my occupations. Sometimes they were Japanese-Japanese who knew the custom and conducted themselves punctiliously in relation to the Japanese interviewed and who understood all the Japanese utterances perfectly, but who found it difficult to give a report of the transaction in English. Or they were American-Japanese who spoke English beautifully, but whose Japanese was rusty, and who were constantly embarrassed because of some social blunder, and who invariably reported figures with one zero too many, or too few, owing to some complexity of the Japanese system of numbering. There was a government-conducted Language School in Tokyo in which young women could study English for the express purpose of acting as guides to inquisitive foreigners, but, unfortunately, their lessons were taught in terms of the "Theory of the State," and, while its graduates could give an eloquent description of the Japanese Way, they found it somewhat difficult to give a simple answer to a simple question. Moreover, since it was impolite ever to say no, if you said to your interpreter, "Do you think this is the right street?" she

would say "Yes" even if it happened to be in an entirely different section of town.

Finally, however, an indirect trail led me to Miss Nara, who had the distinction of being one of the half-dozen women labour organizers in Japan. She was little, and very Japanese in appearance and dress, an extraordinary surprise even in a country that became daily more surprising. With Miss Nara and Miss Hyashi, an American-born, handsome young woman with a Phi Beta Kappa key from a Midwestern university, I visited a group of girl textile-workers in their union headquarters. While we sat in a circle on the mats, and they served tea with great ceremony, they told me about their lives at the mill, and the history of their union. This mill was not one of the show institutions. It was the average large factory. The life of the girls was like that of the Dai Nippon in the routine of the working day, the dormitory life, the communal meals, the lack of freedom, the small wages. It was unlike it in the girls' leisure. They were not pampered with swimming-pools; there were no classes except sewing, and occasionally a lecture on ethics, or a lesson in Flower Arrangement. There was no health programme and the union took care of the sick. The wages ranged from 35 sen a day for the beginners, to 1 yen 50 sen for the most skilled. The average was 70 yen. Putting their heads together and consulting with Miss Nara, they worked out a typical budget for a girl who had been working for one year:

She earned: 35 sen a day for 27 days, or Y 9.45 a month

She spent: Y 4.55 a month board to the mill

.50 health insurance and union dues

2.00 miscellaneous—toothbrushes, sewing materials, etc.

2.40 to family

9.45

She expected to receive a bonus of Y 1.50 once a year. She hoped to be raised to 45 sen by the middle of her second year.

The mill employed 700 girls, of whom 400 belonged to the union; and 130 men, of whom 90 belonged. The history of the union—though not typical—was interesting as illustrating the difficulties in the way of union organization in Japan. The union owed its existence to a tactical blunder on the part of management. As a substitute for "welfare activities" the management had organized a company-union which met occasionally to hear pep talks, or to go

on an infrequent outing. Through the energetic efforts of one of the men employees, the union began to take itself seriously and demanded payment of wages to individuals (instead of retaining them, or sending them to parents) and permission for the girls to leave the mill when not working. The management at once disbanded the union. In the meantime, another worker had begun a "self-help" group to give mutual aid in case of sickness, accidents, and so on. This group had grown, and when the company disbanded its union, the entire organization *en masse* joined the "self-help" club. Then they applied to the national organization for a charter. This was an extremely unusual situation. It meant that practically the entire body of workers was demanding a union. To enforce the demand, they went out on a strike that lasted for fifty days, during which time Miss Nara was arrested. They won the strike, however. At least, management promised them a raise of 2 sen a day; and promised that the girls should be allowed to leave the mill in their free time, and receive their wages. They had gone back to work. The raise had not yet gone into effect, though the strike was a month past; and in order to leave the mill, they had to have permission from their dormitory matron, which still could be, and usually was, refused.

Conditions at this factory, however, according to Miss Nara, were really very good, for the industry. The worst conditions were in the smaller mills—where the food was likely to be bad; and where the different shifts had to share the same mattresses and bedding; and where there was no union provision for sick care—and so no provision. Moreover, the statistics on wages were very misleading. For actually it was usual for the mill to advance the family of the girl some small sum; to pay her transportation to the mill; to supply a uniform. These expenses were charged against the girl's wages, and it was not unusual, for the first six months, to have no wages at all. Moreover, these girls had no schooling beyond the primary grades. Most of them had not learned to read or write, or even to do the simplest sum in arithmetic. Therefore, they could not keep track of what was due them, were wholly dependent on the management; so that if the management wished to take advantage, it was extremely easy to do so.

These girls, almost without exception, came from farms, largely from the northern prefectures. They seemed indifferent to whether they worked at the mill or at home, though several said that they preferred the mill. They did not understand my question, "Are you happy?" They took their lives and their work for granted, and belonging to a union and getting certain problematic privileges was a great adventure—a break in the routine. They were young girls, and the union was a sort of club. They had no sense of insecurity. They all expected to marry, and were rather resentful of my question, "Where will you meet your husbands?" They explained that although they might belong to a union, they were not *mogas*. Their parents would find them husbands at the proper time.

I had a number of meetings with Miss Nara, who finally took me to the headquarters of the "Japan Federation of Labour." There she gave me a sketch of the labour movement in Japan, and outlined the difficulties in the way of unionizing women workers. Like everything else Western in Japan, unions did not arise spontaneously, but were first imported from some Western nation—in this case, America. The first union was formed in Japan as an importation from San Francisco, and was part of the international socialist movement. Both the Japanese government and the industrialists objected strongly to the idea of the workers forming organizations and asking for rights. The Japanese Way was paternalism, with the workers accepting gratefully whatever was given, and the notion of mass action against industry was revolutionary. Therefore, from the beginning, union activity was directly and indirectly fought both by industry and government—the two, in any case, very closely connected when not synonymous.

The first unions were, therefore, disbanded by the government, and the labour movement was quiescent until begun again by accident by an American missionary—a Mr. MacCauley, a Unitarian minister. Mr. MacCauley started a small settlement in Tokyo where his activities among the people attracted the attention of Bunji Susuki, known as the Samuel Gompers of Japan. Susuki was a Christian and he associated himself with Mr. MacCauley, and together they formed a group of workers to study Christianity and arrange mutual aid. This group became the Yuaikai (Friendly

Love Society), which—by hewing close to the Japanese Way, and purging any sign of radicalism—grew into the General Federation of Labour of Japan—the A. F. of L. of the Japanese labour movement.

As with everything else in Japan that sounded Western, I found I had to translate Miss Nara's terms into their Japanese equivalents before I could understand much of what she told me. The attitude and point of view of Japanese labour was entirely unlike that of American labour, and the Japanese labour movement could not be thought of as resembling in any way the labour movement of America. Organized labour has no legal status, even today. Union activities were largely self-help rather than an attempt to force concessions in hours and wages from industry. And as the crisis developed, the vast majority of the unions came out strongly for patriotism, and co-operation with industry and government. Even at the height of the movement, the unions took in less than eight percent of the industrial workers in the large-scale industries. Here again it was necessary to stop to define terms, for "large-scale industry" in Japan meant simply any factory that employed more than five workers. The reasons for the weakness of the labour movement, Miss Nara explained, were four: first, the "Theory of the State," which could always be used to stir up patriotism; second, the active interference of the government; third, the prevailingly small-shop organization of industry that prevented concentrations of workers—except in a few industries; and fourth, the extreme importance of women in industrial Japan.

The Japanese woman, Miss Nara pointed out, was very far from being confined to her home in her role of good wife and wise mother. Around 85 percent of all women between the ages of fifteen and fifty-nine were engaged in some sort of remunerative work, and could be found in all occupations. Women shared farm work equally with their men, and had entire charge of the silk-worms; they worked on the fishing beaches, in the mines, in manufacturing, in commerce. There were, Miss Nara said, smiling, only around 80,000 *geisha*, while there were around two million women in large-scale industry, and around 400,000 employed as common labourers—working on roads, or on construction jobs.

To organize such workers was, obviously, almost impossible.

They were psychologically not ripe for it. They were not "workers" in a class-conscious sense; they were members of a family, contributing their strength to the communal toil to make ends meet. In the large-scale textile industry they were segregated within the mill walls, where organizers could not reach them. Moreover, their terms of contract were for three or four years, which in itself greatly decreased their interest in union activity. With such a constant turnover and such workers, continuity of union interest was almost impossible. As Miss Nara commented, the girls who did join a union did so as they would join any social club, for a break in the routine. Those few who took the union seriously thought of it in terms of getting such privileges as permission to leave the mill grounds, and to receive their wages. No Japanese woman ever thought in terms of "rights."

The union of girl workers I met with was so exceptional as to be almost unique. At the highest estimate there were never more than around 21,000 women organized into unions in Japan. Although women made up two-thirds of the industrial workers, they represented only .05 percent of the organized workers. Therefore, they exerted a drag on the whole labour movement, and strongly tended to keep wages in general at a low level. For the women workers, everywhere, received consistently only half of the rate of wages paid to men for similar work.

Those young girls, who looked so helpless as they sat on the mats in their union room, in their best kimono in honour of visitors, were representatives of the most important class in their country. For women were the vast majority of the workers in all the export industries. Today they were even taking on such jobs as oiling of machines, and making minor repairs. They were almost half of the workers, even in the explosive industry. Their importance was enormous. For not only did they hold down the general wage level; not only did they hold down the labour movement; but they released the men workers for heavy industry, for armaments, for the Army. Unconscious, unaware, fitting sleekly into the Japanese Way for which they had been so thoroughly conditioned, these little girls were creating the "Modern Nation" Japan.

Thinking of these women-workers and the life that they led,

which from the point of view of an American woman accustomed to a high degree of independence seemed intolerable, I found myself remembering the fishing villages and the farmers . . . and the implications of the Japanese Way struck me full-force. For Japan was the living proof that human beings could live tolerably on the absolute minimum of material wealth and individual freedom as long as they were psychologically secure; and as long as they were not disturbed by the tantalizing knowledge of some more desirable alternative. In Japan, all the social instruments—home, community, education, religion and politics—were integrated so that life was meaningful in terms of the individual's obligation to fulfil his role in the complex of family, community and national routines. To an American, the girl-workers were greatly exploited. To them, however, their life was merely the Japanese Way in which there were duties, obligations, loyalties and habits so deeply ingrained as to be accepted without question.

The Japanese Way was satisfactory to the vast majority. If it had not been, Before-Perry Japan could never have become the Great-Power Japan; and if it were not, the population could not increase at the rate of a million a year. It was only the occasional energetic, intellectually lively individual who was uncomfortable and rebellious. Or those groups of individuals who were squeezed out of the accustomed Way without finding a foothold in the new; or were made aware of the alternatives offered by Western civilization. There were, of course, such individuals and such groups. And their existence had a direct bearing on the "State of Crisis."

## VIII

### SWORD OF THE GODDESS

"The Sun-Goddess then bestowed on the deity the curved-jewel chaplet and the mirror, the two treasures which had served to entice her out of the Cave of Heaven. She girt about him, to boot, the sword which the deity Susano-O had drawn from the tail of the eight-headed serpent, and which is revered under the title of Kusanagi (the Great Herb-Quelling Sword). These objects still form the Imperial Regalia of Japan."—*Tales from the Kojiki*, by Yaichiro Isobe

"... the Emperor Jimmu who is the grandson of the fifth generation of the Imperial Ancestress established the Country in 660 B.C. Thus you will see that Japan had a ruler before it was established."—*Japanese Idealism*, by Kishio Satomi.

I now had a definition for the Japanese Way. It was a civilization based on an economy scarcity. It was an integrated system that controlled the individual by religion, social pressure, education and habit even more than coercion. It seemed to be stable. Nevertheless, the leaders of this civilization were hysterical with anxiety.

I had come upon evidences of this hysteria all over the country in the form of an over-insistence upon Japanese culture, and an over-emphasis on mythology and Emperor worship. Everywhere and insistently in dozens of ways, the people were being reminded that their culture was "unrivalled and unique," derived from the gods, enormously superior to the Way of any other nation. When I asked the reason for this incessant propaganda, I was told, "Because of the crisis."

"Because of the crisis," was a phrase I often heard; I saw daily references to it in the newspapers, yet it was difficult for an American to understand its seriousness, because so many of the evidences seemed so trivial. "Because of the crisis," a prefectural governor told the people that they must find new ways of supplementing their incomes, and suggested that they raise "crickets with pleasant chirps." "Because of the crisis," a famous geisha proposed to organize the geisha of Tokyo into a "Woman's National Defence Association" to collect funds to buy motorcycles for the Kwantung Army. "Because of the crisis," the government organized "Musical Weeks" so that "politics might be cleansed by means of music." There was less frivolous evidence: everywhere I saw schoolboys drilling with wooden guns under the direction of army officers, or even staging mock battles with papier-mâché tanks, but their manner was so lackadaisical, so self-conscious, so almost shame-faced, that it was hard to believe that it was meant with seriousness.

More serious seemed the constant small changes in the educational system to cut down on the teaching of foreign languages; to increase the patriotic content of the history courses; and even entirely to re-write historical facts to give them a nationalistic slant. More serious still seemed the national tensions as demonstrated by activities in the Diet, for a statesman had been recently impeached for having said in a debate that "the crisis was a bugbear." The crisis, his impeachers said, could not be a "bugbear" since it had been declared by the



- Emperor in an Imperial Rescript. Most serious of all was the current trial reported in the newspapers, of a group of super-patriots who had, in 1933, attempted to bomb government buildings and assassinate certain government officials with the intention of overthrowing the Parliamentary form of government, abolishing the political parties, and establishing a National Cabinet.

On the surface, Japan seemed to be progressing steadily toward a conscious goal with all the gears of her complicated Way meshing smoothly—yet this nation had been in a declared “State of Crisis” since 1933, and long before that had been in a high critical state, if it was at all possible to judge by the long records of political assassinations and abortive revolutions which had been a spectacular feature of Japan’s modern political life. Here was another paradox of this paradoxical country—that she could show to the world a picture of incredible national unity and steady progress, while behind the scenes, political Japan was riddled with dissension.

I knew by now that the “crisis” referred to Japan’s international relations, and referred also to some critical political situation inside Japan, and knew that the two were interrelated.

It had not been difficult to learn the Japanese point of view on the international aspect of the crisis. The specific “State of Crisis” was the acknowledgment of Japan’s fear that her international relations might darken into war. It had been announced by Imperial Rescript when, in 1933, Japan declared her intention of withdrawing from the League of Nations, following the League’s failure to recognize the legality of Japan’s invasion of Manchuria and the setting-up there of the puppet-state, Manchukuo. This action of the military greatly alarmed the civilian members of the government. They were convinced that in reprisal Britain and the U.S.A. and perhaps Russia would actively intervene—probably in the form of a boycott or blockade—although bombers from Vladivostok were not ruled out as a possibility. The announcement by the Emperor warned the people to be loyal to the Japanese Way and to expect the worst.

There were, of course, no reprisals against Japan, and the Military, greatly strengthened by the unexpectedly easy success of their manoeuvre, had continued steadily to penetrate southward, crossing

the Great Wall into China Proper to set up an independent puppet regime in East Hopei Province just northeast of Peiping. From this strategic position, they had been negotiating with the generals, who governed the northern provinces of China under the titular rule of the national government in Nanking, attempting to persuade them to break connection with Nanking and set up an independent North China to have close financial, economic and political relations with Manchukuo and Japan. The international crisis involved the problem of how far Japan could go with such a project without arousing open and violent opposition from the Western Powers, including the U.S.S.R.

I had discussed this international crisis with everyone who would discuss it. My most coherent informant had been Mr. Toko, of the Home Office, who had arranged my factory expeditions. From the Japanese point of view, Mr. Toko explained, the situation in Manchuria and China was merely a problem in power-politics between the British Empire and the Japanese Empire—complicated by the revolutionary situation in China and the problematical position of Russia. Chiang Kai-shek's "national" government, the British, and the Japanese were all equally alarmed by the success of the Chinese Red armies who—despite Chiang Kai-shek's best efforts—had survived and had the support of great masses of the Chinese peasantry. These Red Armies were a revolutionary force in China opposed equally to Japanese penetration, British penetration and the exploitation by Chinese landowners and bankers. The Japanese could usually get concessions from both the Chinese and British ruling classes by stressing the Red menace.

Chiang Kai-shek had been fighting the Reds since 1927, and continued to fight them instead of the Japanese during the period when Japan was taking Manchuria and encroaching on North China. Both Chiang and the British were not unwilling to have the Japanese in Manchuria as a buffer against possible penetration by Russia. So far, the U.S.S.R. had remained aloof from the situation. Japan's penetration into North China, however, changed the picture. The Reds were violently anti-Japanese and if Japan's project for detaching North China seemed about to be successful, there was a possibility that the Reds might persuade the U.S.S.R. to intervene.

Moreover, Japan's encroachment on North China also threatened the heavy British interests there. Therefore, Britain was expected to intervene. And in fact, Britain had already intervened to the extent of sending to China Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, chief financial expert, whose job, according to Mr. Toko, was to work out some financial deal to stiffen Chiang Kai-shek against Japan. "Naturally," said Mr. Toko, "we cannot compete financially with the British. We have neither wealth enough, nor financial experience enough. It is partly this fact that so enrages our Military."

He went on to say that the Japanese had a strong ally in China's national government in the person of Wang Ching-wei who was Foreign Minister and President of the Executive Yuan. Wang was anti-British, and was using the Japanese to fight the pro-British element in the national government. This, Mr. Toko said, was, in a sense, bad for Japan since it greatly encouraged the Military who could say that the Chinese wished Japanese help in freeing China from white Imperialism. From the point of view of Japan's prosperity it was much better if Japan could compromise with Chiang Kai-shek and Britain, for Japan was completely dependent for raw materials and markets on the good-will of Britain and the United States. The Military, however, did not understand this, and they did not understand diplomacy. They believed that force was all the Western Powers respected. They insisted therefore on a constant show of force and boasting of power. "Some day," Mr. Toko said, "they will go too far, too fast, and involve us in a serious war." Mr. Toko shook his head in good-tempered despair. "The Military mind!" he added, and shrugged.

This account by Mr. Toko had suggested not only the extreme complexity of international politics in the Far East; but suggested also that within Japan there was a sharp cleavage among the ruling cliques as to how the international situation should be handled. I had been gradually collecting data on Japan's political structure, but had found it extremely confusing. It was the more confusing, like everything else in Japan, because of the superficial resemblances to England and America. Politically, Japan appeared to be governed by a Prime Minister assisted by his Cabinet plus the Heads of the Armed Services, responsible to the Emperor. There was a Diet of

two houses which roughly corresponded to the British Parliament. The members of the Lower House were elected by popular vote of males of twenty-five and over. There were two main political parties which elected all but a handful of members. Except for the semi-hereditary character of the Upper House, and the power of the Military, this looked, superficially, not unlike America.

That it was not at all like America, however, had been called to my attention during my first week in Japan. Visiting an official of the Y.M.C.A., I had, while waiting for him, been entertained by his Japanese secretary, who had given me a long lecture on how to get along in his country. Rule Number One was: "Do not attempt to discuss politics, or ask questions about Manchuria." Modern Japan, this Japanese told me, was greatly confused. The political situation was complicated. All I need know was that the political parties were owned outright by the two most important Big Families, who at election time bid against each other, paying money for votes, so that whichever paid the most got the majority in the Diet, and so power to appoint the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and so controlled the government. Today, however, this Japanese said, neither of the Big Families had complete power, because of the Nationalists' groups led by certain army, navy and civilian patriots. These groups could not get power through the Parliamentary system, since that was controlled by Big Business. So whenever the government passed laws or refused to pass laws which the "patriots" considered necessary for the national safety, they merely assassinated some of the Big Business Men and the statesmen who represented their interests in the government. Since this internal split in policy between the Business Men leaders and the Nationalists concerned their attitude toward the Western nations and Westernization, it was necessary for the foreigner in Japan to be extremely careful not to arouse suspicion or resentment from the super-patriotic Japanese.

That this account was an accurate, if simplified, description of the political situation was confirmed by all I learned later. That the tension was steadily increasing was also apparent. Nothing, however, had happened to me, a foreigner in Japan, to dramatize the crisis, and clarify it.

In mid-autumn, however, I had such an experience, apparently

trivial, on the surface, rather absurd, and yet deadly serious in Japan. Yoso Minamoto had asked permission to come to dinner and bring a college friend. They wanted the experience of dining in a foreign home, and they thought, too, this would be a good chance to practise their English. The Minamoto family were among Dee's oldest Japanese friends. She had at one time tutored Yoso in English, and we had exchanged visits a number of times with Yoso's mother. Yoso had accompanied us on various excursions and had taken us to meet his English-speaking university friends. We all felt very much at ease with one another and were delighted to have Yoso visit us with his friend.

The young men came, both shy and self-conscious in their Western-style uniforms. We chatted easily enough through dinner of the usual matters, and after dinner we went into our Japanese-style room so that the young men could be comfortable. The neighbourhood radio was going full blast, as usual, and as we sat down we all recognised the music, for it was the "Tokyo Ondo," the most popular tune that was used for the folk-dancing. I had been so delighted with the effect of this dancing when I had first seen it that I had bought the record with this very tune, and with the help of the illustrations that came with the record, had learned the routine. Now, as Yoso began laughingly to hum the melody, it occurred to me that we might practise the dance. I made the suggestion, and since no one vetoed it, got up and put on the record. As it turned out, the young men did not know the steps very well, and were self-conscious, and yet it amused them too, and soon we were all dancing around in a circle, waving our arms, bending to touch our toes, advancing and retreating, looking silly, and yet enjoying ourselves. Upon this scene of mild revelry, Akiko suddenly burst, sliding open the panel-doors with no ceremony, and beginning to talk with great excitement.

Dee shut off the record with a long, rasping scratch. The young men looked blank and sat down quickly. Dee left the room with Akiko.

"What's the matter?" I asked Yoso.

He seemed not to hear me. Instead, he said that he would have for me soon the list he had promised of modern Japanese novels

that he felt were interesting enough to be translated into English.

Dee came back immediately, and as she came through the door, the young men arose. "I think it time we go now," Yoso said.

They left at once. As we stood at the door bowing them away, I saw standing in the alley two policemen. When they saw me looking at them, they bowed politely. Then, as the young men walked down the alley, they followed slowly. While we had been dancing, they had come to the house and told Akiko to tell us we must stop. There was a law against dancing in private homes, they reminded her. The proper places to dance were in the temple courtyards, the parks, or the few licensed dance-halls, but not in the home. "Because of the crisis," they said, the law must be rigorously enforced.

All I knew of the crisis did not make this episode comprehensible. Mr. Sato was my most satisfactory tutor in political matters and I sent him a note asking him to call.

2

When Sato came, we settled ourselves on the mats, hugging the charcoal brazier for warmth, with a pot of tea for comfort. I told him of the episode with the students, and asked him why it was against the law to dance in homes. And why should it be especially wrong because of the crisis.

"When times are critical," Sato said, "the stability of the people is our most important internal problem. Our nationalists feel that dancing in the home endangers national stability."

I made no comment and he went on.

"It is against the law," he said, "because it is not Japanese *shukan*. It implies a kind of social life, a kind of informality between the sexes that is contrary to our Family System. Should our young men become accustomed to such informal relations with women who are not professional entertainers, they might get the 'dangerous thought' in their heads that it would be better to choose their own wives, better to be free and independent of their family. Since the Family System is the central core of stability in my country, anything that threatens to disturb, in the smallest way, its hold on our young people, threatens the stability of our system.

"In this particular case," Sato went on, "there is another problem.

Intimacy today between Japanese and foreigners is being strongly discouraged—especially intimacy between university students and foreigners. This is because the students, who study foreign languages, are in a position to read foreign books and so be influenced by 'dangerous thoughts.' In school such influences can be somewhat counteracted by our propaganda courses. Because of this background, however, when they associate with foreigners outside of their classes, they are much more susceptible to the influence of foreign ideas."

Sato paused, and I asked him what particular foreign ideas the Japanese leaders feared most.

"They fear," he said, "the idea that the individual should be well paid for his work and should be able to afford things that cost money. They fear the idea that the individual should be independent of the family and the State, should own whatever he earns, and spend it as he chooses. They fear the idea that young men and women should have casual social relations with each other, and should if they so desire marry the person of their own choice. These are the 'dangerous thoughts' they might learn from America. And then, too, there are the even more 'dangerous thoughts' of Communism. Actually, any thoughts at all that are not one hundred percent Japanese *shukan* threaten the stability of my country.

"Such an exaggerated fear of change," Sato continued, "seems strange to an American; yet, unfortunately, our nationalists can make a good case for their side. Modern Japan has been based on a paradox. When we brought in Western machines, industrial and financial techniques, and Western institutions, we set up within our country an alien civilization. That civilization helped us to develop from a little group of islands into a Great Power in fifty years; simultaneously, it threatens to destroy our ancient civilization on the survival of which the modern nation depends. Our imported Western civilization helped us become a Great Power; it also destroyed our national security. These two paradoxes have been all-important in shaping the policies of our leaders.

"You must realize," Sato went on, "that because of our special conditions, our lack of space and wealth, we cannot afford either the things you Americans have or your freedom. It is impossible

for us to build here in our crowded small islands a genuinely American-style civilization with its emphasis on space, material things and individualism. At best we can only contrive a partial, pseudo-Westernization that destroys our own customs and our own values, makes our people uncomfortable and discontented. We could, of course, improve conditions within the frame of our own system, by raising industrial wages and giving the farmer more for his rice. It is, however, unfortunately a fact, that to do this we must either raise the price of our exports or give up our military machine. If we raise our prices, we lose our markets and we starve. If we surrender our military machine, we cease to be a Great Power. And if we cease to be a Great Power, it is not at all improbable that we would shortly cease to be an independent sovereign nation. We have survived and grown because our military exploits have fitted in with the balance-of-power requirements of the Western nations. If we lose this value, if we cease to be able to defend ourselves, we would become a bone of contention between rival Western imperialisms.

"To understand our crisis, you must remember that Westernization came to us wholesale, ready-made, escorted by gunboats. You must remember that we were at that time a 'backward' people—ignorant of science and machines—with no army in the Western sense, and no navy. We were, moreover, a coloured race—one of the peoples who, all over the globe, had been dominated by industrialized white races. To survive as an independent nation, we had to develop an industrial power and a military power. We had to Westernize enough to convince the Western Powers we were a modern nation; we had to industrialize enough to be efficient; we had simultaneously to retain our ancient habits of economy and our social controls. We had to conciliate the Western Powers; we also had to be strong enough to secure and maintain our independence. And we must, of necessity, have close relations with neighbouring Asia. These paradoxes and these problems have been basic throughout our modern period.

"Our crisis," Sato went on, "is the result of these paradoxes and problems. It has been expressed politically in terms of a tug-of-war between two cliques of rulers, who have constantly contended against each other for control of national wealth and policy.



These cliques represent our new industrial power and our new military power. One clique is dominated by the biggest industrial-financial Family-Corporations—the Big Monopolists of which the Mitsui and Mitsubishi are the most important. They control absolutely the economic life of the country. The other clique is dominated by the so-called 'Young-Officers' group of the Military. These leaders, who are not necessarily young, and not necessarily on active duty (since the reserve-officers organizations have been a powerful force behind the scenes), represent the 'new' army conscripted largely from the peasants; and naval officers, also largely of peasant origin. Both of these cliques cut across all classes—there are Admirals and Generals in the Big-Monopolist clique and business men in the Young-Officers clique. They are determined not by class, but by policy. The Big-Monopolist clique believes in the 'conciliatory policy.' They have knowledge of the Western Powers. They realize how dependent we are for markets and raw materials. They believe that they can hold their own in the West in the realm of financial and economic competition in China and elsewhere. Therefore, they wish to conciliate the Western Powers, and keep the army inconspicuous and inactive—only ready to show force if necessary.

"The young-Officers clique is opposed to Westernization within Japan, and in foreign relations stands for the 'positive policy.' They do not trust the Big Monopolists. They say that they are trying to bring Westernization into our country too fast and are, therefore, destroying our national customs and our national stability. They say that the Monopolists use the Diet merely as a technique for increasing their wealth and ensuring their control of taxes and budgets. They say that we cannot compete successfully with the Western Powers by economic and financial techniques; that there we will always be outfoxed. They say that we have become a Great Power by force, and can only remain a Great Power by a constant show of force.

"Moreover, they have behind them a mass pressure. Within my country are certain groups and classes who are discontented. They are the classes that have been crowded out of our system and have not been able to get a secure foothold in the new. They are composed of certain fringes of our industrial workers, certain groups of peasants, certain professionals, students, small business men and

bigger business men who find it increasingly difficult to compete with the Big Monopolists. These restless groups began to appear in our society during the rapid expansion of the World War and the depression that followed. They began to form clubs of one sort and another—some religious, some communistic, some nationalistic, and so on—all separate, yet all united by one emotion—a distrust and fear of the Western ways that were changing the system they were used to, and a distrust and fear of the Western Powers. The Military, aware of these restless, discontented groups, realizing how dangerous they were to the stability of our country, and realizing how useful they might be as pressure groups, began to deluge them with propaganda. The propaganda gave them something definite to focus their grievances around. The Nazis used the Jews for this purpose. Our Military used the Big-Business-Men leaders. The propaganda said that these Big Monopolists had ceased to be Japanese; that they were lining their own pockets at the expense of national security; that they were bringing into Japan Western ideas and institutions that were destroying the Way of the Gods. In the Japanese System, the propaganda stated, everybody had enough, and nobody had too much. Today, it said, the Big Monopolists had too much, and many of the people had not the necessary minimum. They devised a very clever slogan—"The Showa Restoration."

"Showa Restoration," of course, referred to the reign of the present Emperor. The Japanese designate their historical periods by naming them for the reigns of their Emperors. The period immediately after the "opening of the door" was known as the Meiji Era (the reign of enlightened government). The present Emperor Hirohito had chosen for his era the name Showa (the reign of peace through justice).

"The slogan, Showa Restoration," Sato went on, "recalled the fact that in feudal Japan the Emperor had been deprived of his real power by certain clan leaders, and the Meiji Restoration restored him to power. Now, they say, in the process of creating modern Japan, the Emperor has been robbed once again—this time by the Big Monopolists. The Showa Restoration means: Turn the scoundrels out! Restore our land to the Emperor! In practical terms this means: Abolish the Diet, which is merely a tool of the

Big Monopolists; expropriate the Family Corporations; nationalize basic industries; use the wealth of the country to provide relief for the discontented classes, and to keep the military power strong enough so that it would seem invincible and so make the political conquest of North China easier. This slogan not only has great popular appeal, because of mass veneration for the Emperor, but it ties the hands of the Big Monopolists' government, since an act committed in the name of the Emperor is patriotic and righteous.

"Between these cliques there has been open war since 1929. The Big Monopolists control the wealth and the Diet. The Military control these revolutionary groups. And whenever the Big Monopolists cause the Diet to pass laws or refuse to pass laws that the Military feel are necessary they shout 'Showa Restoration!' and some of their patriotic societies assassinate some Business Man or some representative of Business interests in the government. The Manchurian Incident was part of this tug-of-war. The Big Monopolists began to cut down on the army budgets; they had been juggling the gold standard and in the process cleaned up millions, simultaneously forcing more of the smaller Big Business Men out of business; they refused to face the fact of mass unrest in certain rural sections and among certain urban groups. The Army, by going into Manchuria, created a critical international situation that made it easy to turn the mass-unrest into active patriotism, and forced the Big Monopolists to provide money both for bigger military budgets and for relief for the depressed areas."

Sato paused to light a cigarette. The more I learned about Japan, the more remarkable it seemed. I found myself remembering the elaborate festivals, the colleges of culture, the exhibitions of flowers and Tea—these things organized by men who were living constantly on top of a volcano that might explode at any moment.

"Do you see our dilemma?" Sato asked finally. "We have started an industrial process, and we cannot stop. Our Before-Perry civilization was so self-sufficient that we could cut ourselves off, almost entirely, from the outside world for two and a half centuries. Today we are a modern Great Power, but we have lost control of our own destiny. We are completely dependent for our national existence on the foreign powers who supply our raw materials and buy

our manufactured goods. In the past fifty years our population has more than doubled. Much of our land has been taken from cultivation and put into factory sites and dwellings for city workers. We even import cereal—our essential food. We cannot wholly Westernize our country—there is neither space enough nor wealth enough. Our overflow industry must find an outlet somewhere if our economy is to continue to expand. And it must expand, or it will stall."

I said, "Your conciliatory-policy group are the wisest of your leaders. You must go slowly enough to avoid the disaster of war. That much is certain."

Sato shrugged. "How slow is slowly enough? Already our goods are being excluded from the British Empire Bloc by tariffs and quotas. Rayon is cutting into our silk industry. The Western Powers were everywhere in the Far East before us, and they resent our competition everywhere. We are excluded as citizens from most countries. Moreover, it is true that the people have been under very great pressure all through this modern period. Our society has been stable. Our people seem calm and disciplined. But you must remember that everything in our training has taught us to be calm and disciplined. When the calmness goes, there is violence—usually, however, the violence of despair against the self, rather than against an oppressor. Suicide, as you know, is very common among us. Much of our propaganda is an effort to bolster our national morale by instilling a feeling of superiority—pride in our native culture, pride in our military invincibility, pride in our Divine Emperor, descendant of the gods. It is hoped that our propaganda can transform the individual despair and discontent into national aggressiveness."

Sato was silent for a moment . . . then went on: "That is the Year of the Wild Boar. It is the end of a cycle . . . a cycle of crisis for my country. No thinking Japanese but must tremble for what the next cycle may bring."

As he paused with obvious emotion, I repeated after him, "Year of the Wild Boar," thinking that if I wished one word that would express a fundamental difference between Oriental and modern Occidental civilization, that word would be "dramatic", with the emphasis not on the drama of human relations, but on a poetic

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literary sort of drama by which events were complicated beyond their obvious significance, by the overtones of symbolic associations. He was referring, I knew, to the fact that Before-Perry Japan, like China, had recorded time—years, months, days and hours—by using the signs of the Chinese zodiac—the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, cock, dog, wild boar. These signs were still widely used in the Orient for the purposes of marking familiar annual festivals and habitual occasions. Twelve years, each named for a symbol, made a cycle. This year—a wild boar year—ended such a cycle.

Sato was going on, "Look at the record. During this cycle we have created the puppet-state of Manchukuo; resigned from the League of Nations; demanded naval parity with Britain and the U.S.A., and when we were refused it our Premier who signed the agreement was murdered; our Military have talked incessantly of our Divine Mission to create a Pan-Asia. During this cycle two Premiers, a Finance Minister, a leading financier of the House of Mitsui were assassinated. There have been purges of Communists. There have been attempts at revolution. For two years we have been in a declared State of Crisis. Now as the cycle swings to a close, tensions are everywhere increasing within our country, and in our relations to China and to the Western Powers.

"Every zodiacal sign," Sato went on, "has, as you know, its own legends and superstitions, accumulated through the thousands of years of Oriental history. The wild boar is a dangerous symbol . . . Usa Hachiman, god of war, rides on his back. Mothers on the day of the boar, at the hour of the boar, offer gifts to their patron saints with the prayer that they may be favoured, as is the wild boar, with many offspring of reckless courage. My country will need reckless courage for what I see ahead for her in the next cycle. For how can we stop now? We have begun a course for which there is no end but disaster. Blind and hysterical with ignorance and pride, with frustration and fear, made powerful with Western machines, driven by the momentum of these years of change, we will go on to inevitable disaster."

I tried to speak, but Sato stopped me. "Do not criticize us," he said sharply. "You Westerners, at every step of the way, have

encouraged our aggressions. Our nation Before Perry had a record for minding its own business unmatched by any other Great Power. Study our history and you will see how essentially unaggressive we are as a people. Even a very unaggressive man, however, if frightened enough, and armed with a machine-gun, a tank, or a dive-bomber, can be dangerous. In war, as in industry, we have but one great resource—our homogeneity, and our deep conviction that these matters are for us matters of life and death. The patriotism you find here now is fanatical; it is based on years of concentrated propaganda that has told our people that we are encircled by enemies; that we must be prepared for any eventuality. If war comes, the people will not be surprised. They have been warned. And they have been told that their national life is involved in the outcome." Sato smiled grimly. "Our propaganda has more weight than similar propaganda elsewhere because there is so much truth in it.

"Throughout our modern period," he went on, "our aggressive moves have not only not been genuinely opposed by anyone, but have been encouraged both directly and indirectly by everyone—by the weakness of China, torn by internal dissension, and hampered in her free movement by the restrictions imposed by the Western Powers; encouraged by alliances with Britain, who for her own purposes backed our first war with China and our war with Russia; armed and equipped by you Westerners who have made our guns and our planes and our ships for us, have taught us how to make them, selling us the materials to make them with. And through all this, while you have encouraged and helped our aggressiveness, you have discriminated against us as a 'coloured race'; you have been amused by our mistakes with Western culture, you have called us a quaint little people. Every slight you have given us our revolutionary propagandists have used to infect our army and navy with distrust and hatred of the Western Powers; to infect them with the conviction that no 'coloured race' in this world can be free without a constant show of force; and every weapon and institution you have given us we will use against you.

"I cannot blame the Western Powers for what they have done. They, too, have been trapped by the overwhelming power of the

machine-civilization, and have not understood its potentialities for destruction—destruction of security first; and then destruction of peoples and civilizations. There must be in the world, generally among all men, wider understanding of the problems of all people; more sincere effort to solve national problems on an international scale. There must be some assurance to the coloured peoples that they can take part in world affairs—not as colonials, but as equals—or there will be such chaos as you cannot conceive.

“What we are doing in China is a great tragedy. Could we have led the way in peace toward the growth of independence and dignity for the Asiatic peoples, we might have genuinely pointed the way toward a free association of free peoples everywhere. But how foolish that sounds as I say it. We Japanese, alone of the coloured races, have complete national sovereignty and independence. And we won this from you Westerners by our military activities. To beat you on your own ground—in industry and war—was our only chance of preserving our sovereignty. And in so doing, we will destroy ourselves.”

“Then,” I said, “you think there will be war between your country and China; between your country and the Western Powers?”

“*Sodesu*, of course, there will be war. How can you start an avalanche and stop it in mid-flight?” He was silent for a moment, then added, “Our Military have for some time been doping themselves on mythology and incantations. They keep saying, ‘We are gods . . . we inhabit the Land of the Gods, our Sun Goddess will preserve us. . . .’ That mythology and our fear, and our love of country are all we have to oppose your genuine wealth and power. Do not, however, underestimate the force of such mythology, such fear and love. When our soldiers bow at the Yasakuni Shrine, they bow to themselves, deified, soldiers who will be killed in battle. For them there is no alternative that they know about. Their minds are full of what they have been taught, and they are taught that, for the Japanese, his Divine Mission is to die proving that there is one coloured race that will not be subservient to the whites—dying for a dream of Pan-Asia; a united Buddhist world, ruled by the Sun Goddess. There is an exaltation in such a death—better than being merely smothered in our little islands.” Sato stabbed out his

cigarette in the ashes of the brazier. "There is a poem often quoted by our Military:

In days of illness,  
I often dream of death,  
And that is sweet to me,  
As when I dream of love."

## 3

It was a few days after my talk with Sato that Dee received a note from Yoso Minamoto, written on behalf of his mother, inviting us to dine at their home, and saying that his father would, on this occasion, be glad to greet the American. Although there was no mention of the episode of the police, this invitation was, I thought, a kind of apology for that event, and an assurance that it would not interfere with our relationship. This was welcome news.

It was welcome news, too, that I was at last to meet Yoso's father, who had been born a warrior-samurai. A man in his eighties, he had been born the same year that Perry's "black ships" had "opened the door"; he had spent the first eighteen years of his life under the old regime. He was, therefore, a living representative of the almost legendary caste of aristocratic hereditary warriors, who alone in Before-Perry Japan had been privileged to bear arms, and whom the modern world had come to accept as a symbol for aggressive imperialist Japan.

I was, of course, interested in this warrior caste. Throughout the forty years of her modern period, Japan had been conspicuously aggressive. She had fought both China and Russia; had been one of the Allied Powers in the World War; had annexed Formosa, Korea and Manchuria; had secured League of Nations' mandates over innumerable small Pacific islands. In explaining these activities, Westerners usually said that the Japanese were a naturally aggressive people; and they based this judgment on the feudal samurai-caste of disciplined soldiers, and the fact that Before-Perry Japan was ruled recurrently for long periods by military dictators.

By now I knew that this explanation did not square with the facts. Before-Perry Japan—the nation and the warrior caste alike—had been as conspicuously unaggressive as modern Japan had been aggressive. Comparing the feudal samurai with the modern peasant



army, it was, at first, almost impossible to find any connection between them. Reading history and legend, seeing the movies and the Kabuki plays (that deal with Before-Perry Japan, and whose heroes and villains are often samurai), it was difficult to believe that in using the word "samurai" and the words "military-dictator," Westerners and Japanese were talking about the same things.

Moreover, of all the classes of Before-Perry Japan the warrior-samurai had been most rigorously excluded from the new nation. The caste had been abolished by government decree at the time of the reorganization, and although the individuals had been paid government stipends to tide them over into a new kind of life, most of them—ignorant of money and conditioned to despise it—had soon fallen in miserable straits. They had staged a revolt against their extinction, but the new army soon showed them that a conscript peasant armed with a gun was more efficient than a professional armed only with a sword and the ability to make grotesque faces and fearful outcries. Even their Sun Goddess deserted them—going over, as is so often the way of deities, to the side with the most efficient weapons. Many of the troublesome, useless caste were exterminated; others drifted gradually into various pursuits. Only a handful succeeded in making a successful transition into the new age. The vast majority of the leaders of modern Japan came from the ranks of the nobility, the despised business classes, the lowly people, and from the samurai-of-the-gown, the feudal retainers of samurai rank who had been employed in administrative activities.

Yoso's father was, therefore, doubly interesting. For he had not only been born a warrior-samurai, but he had made a successful transition into the New Age. He had entered the newly established military academy and, under the tutelage of French officers—imported for the purpose—had become an officer and had served in the Russo-Japanese War. More interesting still, after the war, he had had, until recently, a responsible post in the Bureau of Military Education—the Bureau that performs the extremely important function of supervising the primary-school history and ethics texts, as well as producing the pamphlets, proclamations, and programmes by which the minds of the peasant-soldiers are moulded. It seemed obvious that if there were any connection between the feudal

samurai and the modern soldier, it must be in the realm of the "military mind," and since Yoso's father represented both the feudal samurai and the new soldier, I hoped that he would help me finally to clarify the connection between them.

On the day appointed, I presented myself at the home of the samurai. I came alone, for Dee had a long-standing engagement which she could not break. I was received by little maids and escorted to the Western-style room where my hostess was waiting to welcome me, attended by another lady, and by Yoso. The Lady of the samurai enchanted me, as always. She was wearing an elaborate formal autumn kimono with a gigantic *obi*, and was perched in a carved Chinese chair, from which her feet in little split-toed *tabi* dangled inches from the floor. Following introductions, she began to chatter, talking in a mixture of Japanese and English, making little gestures of helplessness and turning appealingly to her student son when words eluded her.

The samurai did not join us. He was with a guest somewhere else in the house, playing *go*, our hostess told us, and had promised to greet me later on. She spoke of him as "the General," and, as she gave me this explanation, it became evident that for the General to dine with a lot of women was unheard of—and his appearing at all was a great honour for the foreigner. We dined without him. His Lady, however, kept quoting him all through dinner, and whether we were discussing the cat, the garden, her son's desire for a career in the diplomatic service, or her duties as Lady-in-Waiting to one of the Princesses of the Blood, she managed to suggest that it was the General's opinion that was important. Although he was not with us, he seemed to dominate the gathering, and, while I poked with my silver-tipped ivory chopsticks at the pickled string beans, the hard-boiled eggs and shrimps, and the stewed chicken, my thoughts were with the General who was somewhere in the house playing a game rather like checkers.

After dinner, our hostess led us into a small, adjoining room. In the centre of the floor was a square fireplace, and in the bottom of it a charcoal fire was burning in a crockery pot under an iron grill. The ladies gathered around this fireplace and sat at the edge of the

floor, our feet resting on the iron grill. A little maid threw a heavy "comfortable" across our knees, and arranged a low table so that it bridged our laps. On this she served bowls of imported chocolates and tea. Yoso scorned the heat and sat on the mats behind his mother.

We were hardly settled, when there was a rumpus behind us. Our hostess looked over my head, spoke formally in Japanese, and bowed with an enchanting and coquettish smile. Yoso hastily arose. The samurai had joined us.

I turned and looked at him with some anxiety, not knowing what was expected of me. I saw a large man with a bull neck and a shaven pate in a simple kimono, carrying a fan. He bowed to us, roaring a greeting, his face screwed up into a mask of ferocity. One black eyebrow arched almost to the roots of his hair; a large scar slit his right cheek; his left eye drooped shut. He did not suggest a modern soldier and moulder of minds; he was, however, certainly a samurai—indeed, he was the image of the "one-eyed samurai bandit" who is the favourite character in a popular movie serial.

He strode over to us, climbed down into the *kotatsu* in the empty space between his Lady and me, pulled the "comfortable" over his lap and leered at me with his good eye, his face twisted into a terrifying grimace. Pointing to his obliterated eye, he began to pantomime a duel, accompanying the action with an extravagant declamation in Japanese which his son finally translated. The General had said that he had recently lost the use of his eye, that it had been put out in mortal combat. The ladies, who sat smiling and coquetting at him, accepted the story as calmly as though it were merely polite conversation; Yoso was impassive, and I, not knowing whether one should commiserate or congratulate a samurai on such an occurrence, was silent. My bewilderment, however, must have been obvious, and delighted the General. He gave a triumphant roar and launched into an impassioned discourse, accompanying the dialogue with a heroic pantomime, slashing with his fan, waving his sleeves, and contriving more variations of ferocity and hauteur than I would have believed possible with one set of facial muscles. At the first pause, Yoso translated his remarks. The General had said that I had now met a samurai—I could boast of that—but I could not boast of having seen his Sword—his Sword that had been

forged with Shinto ceremonial; his Sword that was sacred; his Sword that was the samurai's soul; his Sword that was dedicated to the Sun Goddess.

As Yoso translated these remarks, I had the feeling, one had so often in Japan, of being trapped in some fantastic experiment with Time. What connection could there be between this serious and bewildered young man who belonged to the twentieth century and this figure from the middle-ages . . . this delightful farceur . . . this braggadocio . . . this character from a classic melodrama, who now deliberately opened the apparently ruined eye so that I should see that it was as good as my own, assuming meanwhile an expression of profound benevolence so that one would have said, "This kind old man"; then closed it again, with a glare of ferocity; then repeated the opening until he was sure I understood the jest; sure that I understood his duel had been an imaginary one and not an actual combat, and that his eye was as right as rain. His little joke clarified, he let out a roar of triumph that might have destroyed a regiment, and poked me with his fan, overjoyed with the effect he had produced.

I told myself that this man had been an officer on active duty in a major, if distant, war. That he had, until recently, been compiling documents to equip soldiers for duty in a real world. With him there beside me, all this telling was useless. Instead, I remembered the last Japanese movie I had seen. It had been—as most of them are—a story of Before-Perry Japan. The hero had been a top-knotted, swashbuckling samurai, a bravo in fantastic raiment, and incredible high clogs. He had dashed about like some Japanese super-Douglas Fairbanks, beheading people with ribald gestures, duelling, taking on a dozen antagonists at once and slicing them all neatly. It had been bravura . . . exaggerated play-acting with comic intent, and the audience had rocked with mirth. The General was giving us a similar performance. He was, however, acting himself, samurai of Japan, and the role was apparently his reality.

He continued to entertain us. He insisted that Yoso read aloud, from an English translation of the *Kojiki*, the legend that describes how the Sun Goddess sent down the Sacred Sword from Heaven to assist her descendant, the Emperor Jimmu, when he was beset by

the "evil deities of Kumano." The Emperor, having received the Sword, waved it in the air; whereupon, "the evil deities of Kumano fell down like so much corn cut by a reaper." The General waved an imaginary sword and leered triumphantly as though he could hear the sighs of stricken enemies.

He concluded his entertainment by escorting me, with Yoso as attendant, to his Tea-room. It was at the end of a series of winding corridors and we had to stoop to enter through the low door, for one approaches Tea with humility. It was a conventional Tea-room, of bamboo and birch-logs with the bark still clinging. In one corner was a *tokonoma* for the ceremonial Flower Arrangement, and in the floor a sunken fireplace.

The General proceeded to demonstrate a Tea Ceremony. In pantomime, he received imaginary guests; listened while they made the appropriate comment on the imaginary Flower Arrangement; seated himself beside the fireplace; arranged the imaginary utensils for the preparation of the powdered tea; and offered the imaginary bowl between his outstretched palms. So realistic was the General's make-believe that the guests seemed to spring to life all around him—shavenpated, improbable warriors, like himself occupying themselves with an esoteric ritual.

For the General, obviously, fantasy and fact were so closely allied that it would be difficult to be sure he was aware of any essential difference; yet it could not be assumed that this General was only an eccentric individual (how eccentric, at first sight, had all of Dee's friends seemed to an American!). As a young man he had been subjected to the conventional discipline of his samurai-caste; and all his life since, until recently, he had played an active part in the modern activities of his nation. He was bewildering only because, although he was living with his body in the twentieth century, his mind and habits were still in the middle ages of nineteenth-century Japan. His eccentricities were merely the normal behaviour of a civilization that had flourished in another age and had survived to confound the twentieth century. In Before-Perry Japan, Sacred Swords and Ceremonial Tea belonged together, properties and business for the men who played the role of warrior. Moreover, the ritual of Tea, even at its most realistic, was hardly more real than

this wholly imaginary demonstration.

The mystery of the "military mind" was simply that it was another expression of the Japanese Way—a kind of civilization that the machine age made anachronistic. In Before-Perry Japan that civilization was a gallant and imaginative making-a-virtue-of-necessity. Even today, in the realm of social relations and amusements, in many ways it was admirable and thought-provoking, a challenge to the wasteful and over-literal Western world. When, however, the same make-believe extended to politics and war, it became bewildering and frightening. For if the General, and his sort of civilization, moulded the minds of the peasant recruits, one could feel quite sure that no facts got into them.

My meditations were interrupted by the General who, his ceremony ended, rose and stalked to the small door. There he paused to say goodbye. We bowed profoundly. "*Sayonara.*" Majestically the General withdrew, giving the effect of one surrounded by a vast body of retainers on horseback.

Yoso looked at me. I looked at Yoso. I said that I must go, and taking leave of the ladies, went off for my trolley, with Yoso escorting me to the station. I was preoccupied with the events of the evening, trying to discover the connecting link between the improbable Before-Perry samurai and the modern soldiers. The connection, of course, was the Sun Goddess. It was Yoso who gave me the answer, beginning at once to discuss the legend of the Sword which he had read, saying that Westerners thought of the Sun Goddess and the Sacred Sword as merely amusing and quaint mythology, but that for most Japanese it was real.

"Our soldiers," he said, "believe that we cannot be conquered. They believe, what they are told, that the Sun Goddess will always win victories for them. I have studied at the University about your country and about the other Western countries. I know how weak we are compared to you. I know that without your tolerance and help our Goddess would not be very useful. But our peasant-soldiers, they do not know this. They are taught that they can make the enemy fall down before them, just like the Emperor in the legend—by waving the Sword of the Sun Goddess. So they go against overwhelming odds, not knowing that they are overwhelming. But

those of us who know, we fear for the future of our country."

## 4

"The General" had seemed to me the missing-link between feudal and modern Japan. Wishing to clarify further the ideas that the evening had crystallized for me, on the day following my meeting with the General I went on a pilgrimage to Shiba Park, where the Tokugawa Shoguns are enshrined. These Shoguns were the military dictators who ruled Japan for almost two hundred and fifty years immediately before Perry, the Military who are said to exemplify the modern aggressive Japanese. I found the tomb of Ienari, Eleventh Shogun, who had reigned from 1786 to 1838; and looking at his tomb, asked aloud who in all the world had ever heard of him.

This was not an irrelevant pilgrimage, or an unimportant question. Ours was an age in which modern warrior-dictators were becoming increasingly powerful; and aggressive nations increasingly belligerent. In such an age, it was necessary to know what was meant by aggression; and, if possible, what made people aggressive. The explanation that certain peoples were aggressive by nature, and so bound recurrently to commit aggression against their neighbours, was not satisfactory. It was not satisfactory, because it was so easy—so readily accepted that it made further thought about the matter unnecessary. If it happened also to be demonstrably false, it must also be considered actually harmful.

In the case of Japan and the Japanese people, it could be demonstrated to be a false explanation. For who in the world *had* ever heard of the military dictator, Ienari Tokugawa? The answer, obviously, was nobody, except a handful of Oriental specialists. The significance of the question was clear enough the minute you thought of the same approximate period in Europe. There was at that time also a military dictator ruling in France—and who in the world had not heard of Napoleon? Napoleon could with some justice be called an aggressive leader of aggressive and genuine armies. He had led his soldiers from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean; had unseated the monarchs of half Europe; had jostled the Ottoman Empire; had taken Moscow. What had Ienari done? Nothing. He had ruled—or his advisors had ruled for him—over

an "Empire" that consisted of three small islands, for the northernmost was not "pacified" until after the Western nations had brought Japan the machine age. If the word "aggression" meant "unprovoked encroachment, invasion, onslaught," you could clearly not apply the term to Ienari or to the other "military dictators" of his house who had held the controls of the central government for two and a half centuries. For they had not only not advanced against their neighbours, they had not even traded with them. Tokugawa Japan was not only not aggressive, it was deliberately static. Nor was this true only of this particular age. Throughout the long history of Japan, ruled largely by military dictators, the aggressive moves abroad occurred only in the fourth and sixteenth centuries. And these expeditions were brief and fruitless.

It was one of the greatest ironies of Japanese relations with the West, that *samurai* was one of the few words of their language generally known outside Japan; was, in fact, a word that had been taken over by American journalists who used it when they wished to refer to ruthless aggression. It was ironic because the samurai of Tokugawa Japan was not a fighting-man, but only a symbol for one. He was not a fighting-man, because there was no one to fight. The Tokugawa Shoguns, who closed the door of Japan against the outside world, also closed doors within the small islands, closed them so tightly with every conceivable sort of restriction—of economic dependence, of class, of geography, of ritual etiquette, of prescribed duties—that just when the samurai as a distinct caste came into existence, they ceased to have any function except the literary function of *standing for* a body of warriors.

The caste had been established in the period immediately preceding the Tokugawa Era, not for the purpose of aggressive activities, but to make aggressive activities impossible. The creating of the samurai caste was part of a campaign for disarming the peasants. "See," the great Hideyoshi said in effect, "you do not need weapons any longer, because my professional soldiers will protect you." The peasants were thereupon disarmed—forbidden to own weapons—and the sword became a badge of privilege, an insignia of rank. There was no other use for them and they soon became more notable for the decoration of their scabbards than the keenness of the blades.



And, in fact, there was nothing to whet these blades on, save the heads of unarmed commoners. The samurais' only battles were street brawls, or duels—and these seem to have been a kind of formal gymnastics, rather than a serious attempt to do injury. I had seen demonstrations of these disciplines—fencing and wrestling—and they had resembled a ballet far more than a combat.

The idea that the samurai was an aggressive warrior seems to have risen in the attempt of Western scholars to find Western equivalents for Japanese institutions. Since the Tokugawa Era had a form of organization which could be called "feudal," and since the samurai were a class of hereditary warriors, the Westerner at once said, "Knight," and thought of the Crusades. The European feudal knights resembled the nineteenth-century samurai in their literary preoccupation with the exaggerated theatrical play-acting of chivalry. They differed, however, in the very important point of being, despite their play-acting, actual soldiers; soldiers who managed to cross a vast continent to attempt to wrest the Holy Places from the infidel. For the European knight, the play-acting was only part of their profession. For the Japanese samurai, it was everything. They not only did not go to far places on crusades; they did not go anywhere. To keep them occupied, their lords bound them by the samurai-codé called Bushido, "The Way of the Warrior," an incredible tangle of prescribed duties, complicated by fantastic excesses of meticulous hair-splitting etiquette that turned life into an elaborate theatrical performance. And so important was this ritual etiquette that failure in some minute point of *shukan* could be expiated only by *harakiri*, a ritualistic suicide, in itself a stylized theatrical performance, with gestures and costumes minutely prescribed. The samurais' education was mythology and character-building. Their virtues were the virtues of the Japanese Way—frugality, loyalty, obedience. Having no occupation, except to suppress an occasional outbreak of unarmed peasants, they were kept busy by the minutiae of their time-absorbing ritual etiquette; and their escapist rituals of Tea and Flowers. By such activities, by making the trivial seem important, they compensated for having nothing to do, and nothing to do it with.)

As the eighteenth century became the nineteenth, and their rituals

became increasing complicated and elaborate, the samurai became finally a sort of character in a morality play—Frugality, Loyalty, Duty, personified. Their battles were sham battles. They could pretend to be invincible warriors, for they were never put to a test.

The connection between such fanciful warriors and the modern peasant army at first seemed impossible to find. The connection, however, was there. It was the Japanese Way: mythology, make-believe, and character-building. The modern Japanese insofar as he was a good soldier, was so not because he was aggressive, but because he was obedient and frugal and had faith in the power of his mythology. The mind of the modern peasant-soldier was conditioned by every factor in his life and education to believe in the same myths and the same virtues on which the feudal warriors had been moulded: loyalty to superior, loyalty to the *Tenno*, and faith that the Sun Goddess, who could make his crops grow, could also—with her Sacred Sword—destroy his enemies.

I had seen the modern soldiers, in companies, standing before the Palace of the Divine Emperor, bowed in worship; I had seen the primers which they had read as little boys, instructing them in the mythological exploits of legendary Emperors who had won battles by waving sacred swords; and I had seen pronouncements of their Military Education Bureau, prepared by men like the General, assuring them that with the help of the Divine Goddess they were invincible. Such mythology was taught them daily throughout their lives. They were lectured incessantly during their school-days, during their army service, after their service in their reserve organizations. No dangerous thoughts could get by this barrage, to tell them of the real world with which Japan today must deal. The peasant-soldiers of the Great-Nation Japan were living in two worlds—their bodies were in the twentieth century, but their minds were still in the Age of Gods.

The Japanese unblushingly referred to "The Founding of the Empire" and dated it back 2,600 years. This "Empire" existed only in the imagination of the Japanese. It was a mythological entity of the same order as the Sun Goddess, for the Japanese controlled no territory outside their own small islands until the Western world

brought them the machine age. The Before-Perry "Empire" was a myth. The Before-Perry samurai, as a genuine soldier, was a myth. Aggressive Japan was wholly a creation of the twentieth century. The Divine Mission, to create a Pan-Asia, was strictly machine-made. The causes for Japan's modern aggression were to be found in the complex of factors, both national and international, that had come to Japan when the machine age energized her languid people, and broke down her individual and national security by destroying her Way, by making her dependent on other nations, and by making isolation impossible. The causes were political, economic and psychological, but of these the psychological were perhaps the most important, since it was the insecurity, the fear, the frustrated pride of race, that, welded into a passionate nationalism, was the dynamic for aggression.

Caught in the flood of forces that swept over them in the late nineteenth century, the Japanese had ridden the waves. Their strokes were becoming more frantic. Bolstering their morale by repeating their fairy-tales; hypnotizing themselves by saying over and over, "Our Empire—since 660 B.C.—Our line of Divine Emperors who have ruled since time immemorial—Our Bushido—Our Nippon Spirit—Our Samurai—Our invincibility—Our Sun Goddess"—the modern armies of Japan, their heads full of mythology, and their sacred swords replaced by bombing planes and machine-guns supplied by the Western Powers, had gone against actual foes as though they were still the imaginary enemies the samurai fought in feudal Japan. And the real foes, like the evil deities of Kumano, frightened by the legend, largely invented by Westerners, had gone down before the modern samurai as the evil deities of Kumano had gone down before the Sacred Sword. The Japanese armies were told they were invincible. And they could seem to be, since they had never been put to a serious test.

Japan was a disturbing proof that the dream is more powerful than reason. For no reasonable people in Japan's position would have risked the Manchurian Incident. The panic of the Westernized business men was proof enough that those Japanese who had made a transition into the twentieth century were aware of the fantasy behind Japan's Divine Mission. Yet the Kwantung Army continued

to encroach steadily against vast China—and the Japanese Military with no resources behind them could threaten the world with their plan for a Pan-Asia, to liberate the “coloured colonials” everywhere.

The possibilities for chaos in this situation were so great that the American, standing before the tomb of this unknown dictator, was appalled. One thing was sure. Now that the machine age had made isolation impossible for any nation; now that the machine age made the mildest of men as dangerous as the most aggressive; now that the machine age could turn self-sufficient agricultural people into dependent, exporting people; now that the machine age could create individual and national insecurity that could become passionate aggressive nationalism—it was essential, if the world were not simply to be given over to chaos, that all people everywhere try to understand the problems of all people, try to work for an international order. An order in which national insecurity would be replaced by international co-operation; an order in which all people were equal, regardless of race, colour, or previous condition of dependence; an order which would destroy the Japanese racial propaganda, by destroying the conditions on which it was based.

## 5

To dramatize these findings, and to suggest again how important Japanese mythology might be to the world at large, my next day's newspaper published a new Imperial Rescript. The Emperor had announced a special national holiday to honour the Sacred Sword of the Sun Goddess. This Sword, given by the Goddess to her descendants-on-earth to help them conquer and maintain their “Empire,” was one of the “Three Sacred Treasures” of the nation. These treasures—the Jewels, the Mirror, and the Sword, all gifts from the Sun Goddess—were enshrined and worshipped as a routine of Shinto ritual. Now the Sword, called *Kasanagino Tsurugi*, was to be transferred to a new shrine and this event was to be solemnly honoured by the Emperor and the nation.

Making inquiries, I learned that although the renewal of shrines is an important part of Shinto ritual, the very important Atsuta Shrine—where the Sacred Sword was kept—had not been renewed for over forty years. More significant, it had last been renewed in

1893, shortly before the Sino-Japanese War. That renewal had been a symbolic preparation for war; a reminder to the people that the Sword of the Goddess made them invincible. Now again the Emperor seemed to be telling his people to be of courage, for the Sword of their Goddess would disperse their enemies "like so much corn cut by the reaper."

The very name of the Sword suggested how powerful a hold this mythology might have on an agricultural, nature-worshipping people; how strong a hold on the minds of peasant-soldiers. "The Herb-Quelling Sword, the Grass-Mowing Sword!" How strong a reminder this was that their Goddess was all-powerful. The deity who protected the peasants' crops from the unfriendly nature spirits was also the deity who protected the peasant-soldier's life from his enemies. The Sword of the Goddess, by this special ceremonial, was now the symbol of unity for the nation.

Reading the newspaper in which this Rescript was announced, I was constantly reminded of the accounts of Japan's international crisis given me by Mr. Sato and Mr. Toko. The tensions that had been accumulating throughout the years seemed about to come to some sort of climax. Another naval conference was to be held in London in the winter, at which Japanese demands for naval parity were to be reconsidered. An English statesman had commented sharply on Japan's activities in North China. In China, the governors of the North China provinces were making cautious announcements about the desirability of their autonomy from Nanking, and the need to co-operate with Japan. The Kuomintang—the national party of China—was about to hold a Congress at which the pro- and anti-Japanese elements were to decide whether or not the Japanese advances in North China should be stopped, and under whose leadership. The British financial expert Sir Frederick Leith-Ross was conferring with members of the Nanking Government, with Chinese bankers, his activities eyed with the gravest suspicion by Japanese Generals, who were dashing back and forth across China uttering statements of affection for the Chinese and their "Divine Mission to bring happiness to all the world."

Early in the year, War Minister Hyashi had given out the warning: "The crisis is now, and is also in the future." Was the special

celebration of the Sacred Sword a final reminder that the climax of the crisis was imminent? A climax that might decide whether Japan's mythological Empire could become real, or whether it must dissolve against the hard facts of their economic and psychological vulnerability.

## IX

### GOODBYE, AKIKO

It was late December. Along the chilly streets hurried the matrons about their shopping. They had wrapped scarves of purple woollen about their throats, had pulled heavy *haori* over their layers of winter kimono, turning themselves into turtles that walked on their hind legs, bending slightly forward under the weight which they bore on their backs. Gentlemen of fashion wore the skins of red foxes around their necks, over their kimono. Masks of black or white gauze were protecting a million noses from the cold. For a few months, Tokyo would be blanketed under dark, clumsy, protective layers, picturesqueness defeated by winter.

The Mitsukoshi *depato* had been celebrating Christmas for weeks. In the rotunda of this department store, modelled after Wanamakers, a gigantic pine tree made a friendly haven for both Christian and pagan gods. On its branches, the Virgin Mary, modelled in painted clay, was a neighbour to the Sun Goddess, frail and diaphanous in silvery paper. Santa Claus and the pot-bellied badger swung side by side among the multicoloured glass balls, the sheaves of cellophane and tiny electric bulbs; while from the balcony above came the deep rumble of an organ playing "Holy Night."

In our household, we had preoccupations other than Christmas. Dee had received a commission from a British journal for a series of articles on China, and she was momentarily expecting the completion of the arrangements that would take her to Nanking for several months. I, too, was soon to leave Japan, and there was the final flurry of tying up loose ends, and finding a passage home. This last was not a simple problem, for Yokohama was becoming a backwater as the tide of commerce swept toward Kobe, and except for Japanese ships crossing the Pacific, or an occasional round-the-

world-cruise liner—neither of which suited me—passage was difficult to arrange from Tokyo. Our problems, however, seemed frivolous in the face of those involving our Japanese friends.

For Akiko, life was turning another spiral. Ino, her husband, had at last been brought to trial. He had stood before the judges and had answered questions which probed his attitude toward the Way of the Gods. During his two years of imprisonment, his "dangerous thoughts" had been dissolved and filtered away by the chemistry of isolation and social disapproval; and the surface of his mind gave back a clear and unruffled reflection of a divine land under divine direction, as though the Sun Goddess, as she leaned down to inspect her Sacred Islands, obliterated everything except the image of her own mysterious features. The judges had been satisfied. Now tomorrow, or next week, or next month—Ino would be released. Akiko was to become once more a Japanese wife.

It was necessary for her to plan for this event. Where should she take her husband, pale and apathetic from two years of suspense and isolation? There was the financial problem, for she had saved but little from her wages; there was also the problem of satisfying the police. Dee had suggested that Ino come to us; the house was large enough, so that our two families could be independent as long as Dee and I were there, and soon both of us would be gone. It seemed an ideal arrangement, for Dee was keeping the house and expected to return to Japan; meanwhile her absence in China would give the young couple a breathing-spell for readjustment. The police, however, objected. It was not into a home of foreigners that a discharged Communist would be released. Akiko was still seeking a solution, although whatever she decided was subject to veto. In the end, the police would probably recommend the procedure. In the meantime, she must go here and there throughout the city, finding small rooms where they could set up housekeeping. She could perhaps keep her job with Dee when she returned from China; that would give them a financial base until her husband found work—though perhaps Ino would not permit his wife to serve in a foreigner's home.

Her suggestions and plans were all tentative and uncertain. Ours, for a time, were no more positive, either for her or for ourselves.

Our Japanese friends all said that this was no time to leave Japan, urging us to remain, while offering us increasingly elaborate farewell entertainment. Without exception, they offered me a home during Dee's absence, suggesting that if I were tired of Japan, it was because I was tired of Tokyo. If I would stay with them, in some one of their suburban homes, perhaps I would see it with fresh eyes. Keeping house, they suggested, was difficult for foreigners. And with Akiko gone . . . Having urged this, having dropped in day after day to discuss arrangements—what could be done about breakfast, would a Japanese breakfast satisfy me, or would I have to have *tosuto* and *kohi*? Would I sleep on a Japanese mattress, or would I bring my own cot?—difficulties began to arise . . . It would be interesting to have a foreign guest, but how complicated! Foreigners were hard to satisfy. They were likely to be uncomfortable and cold, were likely to want meat and milk, bread and butter—inconvenient, expensive things. There were more serious objections.

No individual was entirely free of the uncomfortable knowledge that, to the rulers of the country, every foreigner was a symbol of an unfriendly world. The papers kept the people informed of the insulting attitude of the Western nations at the current naval conference. The radios vibrated with reminders that the Western peoples considered the Japanese an inferior race. Hardly a group of pilgrims to a national shrine but was addressed by an officer in uniform or some respected great man, who told them of the crisis in which their country found itself. Mr. Muro, who came to us to practise the English he taught at school, found himself faced with the probable loss of his job as the programme against the teaching of foreign languages spread. The genuine friendliness which individual felt for individual was distorted by the realization that such friendliness was now suspect. Into the most casual gathering was injected the element of nervousness, so that the hiss and giggle of embarrassment seemed the predominant music of this winter. The embarrassment of an instinctively hospitable and friendly people whose hospitality might be misconstrued by the police. The interest in Tea Ceremony and Flower Arrangement was becoming an obsession. Japanese culture was the one safe topic—the only legitimate tie between East and West.



Japan was in a "State of Crisis," and no one was allowed to forget it. The events—both national and international—that were causing the crisis went on beyond the circle of the average man's daily activities. He knew what could be read in the newspapers, what he was told over the radio. The hysteria, generated by the government, was experienced largely by the government. Yet the backwash was apparent in the general state of nerves, in the undercurrents that seemed to attend the simplest and least significant gathering, in the knowledge that so much insistence on a crisis must eventually produce one.

It seemed evident that I was leaving Japan with a climax approaching. I wanted to go, yet at the same time I felt guilty to be leaving my Japanese friends in a situation so precarious—if it were as precarious as the tension suggested. Still, what could I do, even if I stayed, to help any of them? It was obvious enough that a foreign friend was a liability, rather than an asset. So while our friends urged us to stay, and gave us farewell parties, I continued to look for passage on a freighter that would take me home the way I wanted to go, by way of the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, and Malaya . . . toward those scattered parts of the world where were congregated many of the "coloured colonials" whose freedom was Japan's "Divine Mission."

Of our friends, it was, of course, Akiko whom I was most concerned about. Not only because her situation seemed so almost hopeless, but because I had become so firmly attached to her as a friend, what happened to her was personally important. We had spent a great deal of time together, and had, as well as we were able, exchanged information and attitudes about our two countries and our own personal experiences and feelings; and during these months I had seen her shyness gradually become companionship; her habits of courtesy-assent to any statement change into an un-Japanese habit of challenging question or discussion. When we were alone, Akiko was our companion and friend. In our household we ignored all formality, and Akiko had got into the same easy way, and with us omitted all etiquette, except, of course, the politenesses that are the universal custom. She had even fallen into the habit of sometimes burlesquing the extreme Japanese formality, and would occasionally

amuse us by mimicking a very proper young matron paying a formal call—showing us how she must enter a room; how she must place her hands as she bowed—all this with a wicked twinkle of suppressed mirth in her eyes, and an exaggeration of gesture that was very comic. At such times Akiko seemed quite American, and it was only afterwards, when some Japanese occasion would make her stiffen into courtesy formality, that I would feel guilt at what our influence might, later on, mean for her. For Akiko would some day return to the Japanese system, for which her life with us might completely disqualify her, as Chiyo's life in England had made her an alien in her own land.

Akiko, however, gave no outward sign that this was so. Her informality and new freedom were part of her only when we were alone. She seemed to move from one life to the other reflexively, without conscious thought. When we had Japanese guests, she was completely Japanese. She performed the correct etiquette, and then retired to her room or the kitchen, not because she was a kind of servant in our home (for, of course, she was our friend and companion, rather than a servant), but because she was a Japanese woman, and the Way for woman was effacement. We could scarcely ever persuade her to come to the table when we had Japanese gentlemen as guests—even when they were intimate friends of her husband—as Nobu and Sato, for instance. On the few occasions that I had insisted, she sat in silent flushing embarrassment, really uncomfortable. The gentlemen, moreover, except for the courtesy greeting, always ignored her. Akiko was a college graduate, a student who could translate English books into Japanese—yet even Mr. Sato, whose long years in America had made him seem so like an American, never included her in our discussions, and when I occasionally attempted to, by asking her opinion, was openly impatient, as Akiko was uncomfortable.

Being fond of Akiko, I was concerned for what her relationship with us might mean for her, and this was a problem most difficult to answer. There was always the danger of judging Japanese reactions from an American point of view, of assuming that because an American found certain habits of living uncomfortable, the Japanese must also find them uncomfortable; of assuming that be-

cause an American found certain customs and restrictions intolerable, they were intolerable also to the Japanese. I had by now learned this lesson—that the Japanese civilization was as satisfactory to the average Japanese as the American was satisfactory to the average American. I had been taught by our friends and guests that they preferred to sit on the mats; that they preferred cold rice for lunch; and I had been taught by the textile workers and the innumerable other Japanese women I had met under different conditions that the average woman preferred the Family System of regulating the relations between the sexes, if only for the reason that it was the system approved by their society. For a Japanese woman to choose her own husband, or even to go about freely or to converse freely with a man not her husband, was the equivalent of an American woman's living with a man without marriage. It was the exceptional woman in either system who would risk the social consequences of such radical behaviour. And as it was possible, in America, for a conventional woman to be swept off her feet by circumstances into this particular sort of unconventionality, and except for this rebellion, remain conventional in her ideas and feelings—so it had been possible for Akiko to have made a really serious break with her society without any consciousness of rebellion against the Way of her country.

At least, if she felt rebellion, she did not show it. Her interest in the lives of American women seemed to be curiosity, rather than envy. She marvelled at our activities, but the idea of emulating them seemed not to occur to her—not only because it would be economically impossible for her to have our freedom, but because it would be psychologically impossible, for freedom implied insecurity and individual adventuresomeness for which she had no background. Yet, in her own life, she was facing with equanimity problems that might well have made any woman panic-stricken. She must go on a round of police interviews, of visits to her husband in jail, preparing for a precarious future, knowing that she must soon give up her semi-freedom with us, to return to the full controls of the Japanese Way. She behaved with the utmost poise and dignity. Meticulously dressed, beautifully controlled, she moved between the two dissimilar worlds of her life, doing what must be done with such imperturbable quietness that, had I not known better, I should have

said that she merely had no awareness of her plight, nor any feelings to express.

But I did know better—there were dozens of small signs to tell me when Akiko was hiding some deep emotional tension. And it was at such times that I thought I understood both the advantage and the danger of the Japanese Way of discipline by the conditioned reflex. The advantage was that in her relations with Japanese her behaviour was automatic. Since the police represented authority, they were superiors; and although the specific relation had not been foreseen in Akiko's education, the proper reflexes were there, and the accustomed forms made a support for her inner uncertainty, as the steel brace at her back, supporting the mass of her brocade *obi*, stiffened her posture. These controls, learned in youth, made for great outward order in human relations. The danger was that in so bottling up emotion—with the usual safety-valve, of anger, hysterics, and so on, forbidden—the outbreak would be proportionately more violent when the emotion became uncontrollable. The point of violence for Akiko, however, seemed very distant.

Akiko usually showed emotional stress by some forgetfulness of custom, or by some over-elaboration of custom. At ease, she was animated and her face expressive. Under emotion, her face became merely a mask of meaningless mirth. Her courtesy smile was as unlike her genuine mirth as her most formal bow was unlike the semi-humorous salute she always gave us as a breakfast greeting. Only once in all the time I knew her did she give open evidence that she was pressed, emotionally, close to the breaking-point.

This incident occurred just before our household was being finally broken up. Our plans had worked out at last. I was to sail from Kobe—home by way of the South Seas—and Dee, a few days later, was to cross to China. Nobu having heard of our final preparations had come rushing in to invite us to a farewell entertainment. He was in a state of considerable excitement, for he had just heard the news that Ino might soon be released from prison. Because of this double occasion for celebration, he had decided to give a dinner-party which would say farewell to us, since we must go, and honour Ino simultaneously. Ino, of course, could not attend, since he was still in jail. But because this was a very special occasion, Akiko

should attend the party, and represent her husband. Chiyo would be invited also—and Tama's husband and Tama—a Western-style dinner-party, with both men and women, held at his favourite Chinese restaurant.

We were to meet at the restaurant at 6.30. Dee and I were huddled around the *hibachi* waiting for Akiko, who had gone that afternoon to the prison on her bi-monthly visit to her husband. The jail was some distance away—a long ride on a dozen trolleys—and Akiko had gone out with her *ferushiki* of clean clothes for Ino. She was looking prim and cold in her most formal kimono, the little chignon pinned to the back of her head, her face set in an unusually Japanese grimace. She dreaded these excursions, I knew. She had told me of waiting in a squalid anteroom sometimes for hours before she received permission to go in. All about her were poor people, ragged people, diseased people—people in distress of the sort she seldom saw. They made her unhappy, and they made her uncomfortable. It was a terrible thing to be sitting among the outcasts and criminals and beggars.

Today Akiko was unusually late in returning. It was well after six when we heard the door pushed back violently with no phrase of greeting, and she rushed in and stood leaning against the door frame, graceless with emotion.

"What's the matter, Akiko?" Dee asked.

We were kneeling on the mats to be near the heat. Akiko, however, chose a chair and sat in it, slouching. The chair and the slouch were a defiance. Her small chapped hands lay with the weight of habit quietly on her lap, but her words came out in a torrent.

When she had reached the jail, she had seen that other woman friend of her husband leaving. She had been to see Akiko's husband! "How dare she do such a thing!" Akiko had been kept waiting a long time—she, the wife, was kept waiting, since two visitors in an afternoon were forbidden. At last, since Ino was to leave so soon, the authorities had waived the rule. She had dared to question Ino. He admitted that the other woman had been to see him—had often been to see him. He had accepted presents from her. The pressure of Akiko's tension seemed to fill the room with an oppressive weight. She leaned forward to us, "You," she said, "you are

Western women. Give me advice then. Do you think I am justified in taking him by the kimono collar and shaking him just a little?"

That was the gesture permitted by custom to the injured wife when she felt wronged beyond endurance. Did we feel that she had been sufficiently wronged to permit this undignified and un-Japanese display of emotion?

Looking at Akiko, for once almost ready to burst through the restraint of perfect self-control, I found myself remembering the throngs of people, all over Japan, who could be found daily and almost hourly, bowing in a group before some national shrine. Now, I thought I understood something that had puzzled me often—the feeling of electric tension that seemed to flow in waves from the bowed, silent people. Especially was this true on any occasion of national celebration, of the vast throngs bowing before the Imperial Palace, or the Yasakuni Shrine where the spirits of soldiers killed in battle were venerated. It occurred to me now that these moments of communal worship of some national symbol made the only legitimate release of emotion permitted under the Japanese way. In Japan the love of country, either as a nature-worship or patriotism, was the only emotion that custom allowed the individual to express. And so in the million genuflections of a million bodies before some recognized symbol was released the tension of a million private emotions too long repressed, too studiously denied. A problem for the future, not only of Japan, but for the world, was concerned with what might happen if circumstances ever brought about a lowering of the controls, and if this dammed-up emotion were ever released on a flood of fear and national insecurity.

## EPILOGUE

THE Kobe Express, rushing me away from Tokyo, toward the ocean, away from Japan, seemed in its flight to be trying to pronounce the last word on Japan's crisis. Tokyo to Kobe was, today, twelve hours by train, or scarcely an hour by air—a trip of the utmost simplicity. Yet, less than fifty years ago, it was a journey of weeks, a difficult excursion. The sprawling cities of Tokyo and Osaka, still separated

by seas of rice, might tomorrow thrust out their industrialized tentacles further and further, until the land, with its agricultural pageantry, its fox gods and its communal ties, would be buried under the crowding small shacks of industrial workers, and the two become one. A view of the world from this newest of the Great Powers dramatized the fact that Japan's crisis was part of a world crisis that was part of a revolution in time and space caused by the machine age.

The Oriental mind has always known that the conception of time and space as inelastic and arbitrary measurements is merely the illusion of man seeking for an ordered universe. The machine age has demonstrated the truth and terror of this proposition. Journeys that formerly took months can now be accomplished in as many weeks, cities that were separated by days can be bridged in hours or minutes. Railways, motor cars, motor ships, airplanes, drawing the world together, telescoping time and space like the convulsions of some gigantic accordion.

The movement of the Kobe Express, contracting the miles from Tokyo to the southern coast, was part of that greater movement of Time—that, released from bondage by the machine, has rushed over the world, unrooting the old, increasing its momentum almost daily, until the new is old almost as it is born. What was it the Red Queen said to Alice: "Faster, faster, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place"? Today the dream becomes the reality in a world which in the furious speeding up throws men and nations helter-skelter on top of each other, in panic, clawing and striking, caught in the inexorable maelstrom of Time out of control.

It is rushing past us now, contracting space by the friction of its movement, uprooting the paddy-fields, smashing the small shrines, ripping off the kimono. The machines race. . . . Today the cogs still catch. . . . Tomorrow?







